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ADVENTURES OF AN ALPINE GUIDE



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CHRISTIAN KLUCKER

In the Albigna Hut, 1922

Cruda deo viridisque senectus.

ADVENTURES OF AN ALPINE GUIDE

BY

CHRISTIAN KLUCKER

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRD GERMAN EDITION BY ERWIN AND PLEASAUNCE VON GAISBERG. EDITED AND WITH ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS BY H. E. G. TYNDALE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

THERE can rarely have been a guide better qualified than Christian Klucker to write his own memoirs. Of a nimble wit, fearless and outspoken, acutely observant of men and nature, an admirable letter-writer, and standing in the very forefront of his profession, he might well have turned with confidence to his pen. Such was not the case. "These memoirs—they plague me, they give me no rest!" he exclaims. "I have neither the style nor the language," he writes to Dr. Janggen; "as I review the past, I see that the faults, alas! outnumber the virtues."

Fearful lest he might depart from strictest fact and justice, he writes with a simplicity of style which the translators have endeavoured to retain. Slipshod accounts, such as those of the Russian Rydzewski, he could not endure. Even his beloved Norman-Neruda does not escape censure; and had Klucker lived to complete his memoirs, there was a rod in pickle for Güssfeldt. His own contemporary notes, and a remarkable memory, form the basis of a narrative almost entirely free from inaccuracies; a sure claim to that title of "The Infallible" which he valued so highly from Farrar.

Klucker was a man greatly beloved. Walter Risch relates that through the length and breadth of Switzerland, from Dauphiné to Dolomites, there was always the same question: "And what is good old Klucker doing?" His own writings reveal the warmth of his friendship for such employers as Curtius and Farrar;

and toward guides of other districts and other races—Emile Rey, Daniel Maquignaz, Sepp Innerkofler—a generous appreciation of their great gifts, and a wise understanding of their characters; of jealousy, not a trace.

"He was, of course, the most charming of companions," writes Dr. Wilson. "While as a climber he was second to none, he was the 'safest' guide I had ever been with. Colonel Strutt has reported of him that during his long career he had never had both feet in the same crevasse at the same time; and his extraordinary care in the management of the unemployed portion of the rope, so that it could not dislodge loose stones (and his insistence on the whole party doing likewise), was only another example of the thoroughness of his methods in every detail of mountaineering."

Despite his supreme skill and prestige, he was too much of an idealist to regard the mountains as a mere source of income; they meant far more to him. "They steeled my powers of will and health, and gave me the strength and courage to overcome life's difficulties." So wrote Klucker, after fifty years of guiding. Life was difficult for him to the end, but as each summer came round, he would step out once more with a fresh courage, to find that rest and welcome which the hills alone could give. Four shepherds once welcomed another Christian to the Delectable Mountains—Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, Sincere; to Christian Klucker these would be no strangers, for they were the shepherds of his own spirit.

* * * * *

My thanks are due to those who have kindly helped me in the editing of this book; Dr. Claude Wilson and Mr. Sydney Spencer, President and Honorary

Secretary of the Alpine Club; Colonel E. L. Strutt, Editor of the *Alpine Journal*, from which he has courteously allowed me to quote extensively; in Switzerland, M. Paul Montandon, Herren Fümm, Riederer, and Rütter; in Italy, Cavalieri Guido Rey and Vittorio Sella; Herren Barth and Bühler, of the German and Austrian Alpine Club; the distinguished guides, Josef Pollinger, Adolphe Rey, and Walter Risch; and among English climbers, Dr. Collie, Frau Norman-Neruda, Professor Gask, Mr. T. L. Kesteven, and Mrs. Roberts Thomson. Dr. J. Monroe Thorington of Philadelphia has most kindly brought names and heights up to date in Chapter VII. In conclusion, I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Ernst Jenny, editor of Klucker's *Erinnerungen eines Bergführers*, who has most generously supplied me with much valuable material, and whose biographical sketch of Klucker here printed strikes so admirable a note of sympathy, and to Mr. John Grey Murray, for much valuable advice.

For names and heights of mountains in the Southern Bregaglia Alps, I have used the new sheets 520 and 523 of the Siegfried Atlas, together with that most lucid of Climbers' Guides, the S.A.C. *Bündner Alpen*, Vol. 4, by Herr Hans Rütter of Wädenswil; where discrepancies arise I have followed the above-mentioned maps, as being the later authority.

H. E. G. TYNDALE.

WINCHESTER COLLEGE,
October 22nd 1931.

A WORD BY THE WAY

PREFACE TO SECOND GERMAN EDITION

CHRISTIAN KLUCKER'S memoirs no doubt surpass anything which individual guides have written of their exploits hitherto, because they cover the whole life and all the activities of the man, and constitute at the same time a document of the first rank in Alpine history. It is certain that not all Alpine laurels rest upon the heads to which they rightfully belong. In *The Pioneers of the Alps* (1887), Cunningham and Abney have given to thirty-five guides of the Bernese Oberland, the Valais and the Mont Blanc district, the place which is their due. It is natural that the conducted *Herr* should see and judge many things in a different light than does his guide. But it is equally natural that the guide should see the mountaineering ability and the general attitude of his *Herr* with different eyes than does the *Herr*, his employer. Up to the present, it has been chiefly the *Herr* who has spoken on the subject of mountain achievements. In this book a great guide speaks, frankly and fearlessly, critically, but with modesty, of his exploits and of his position toward his employers.

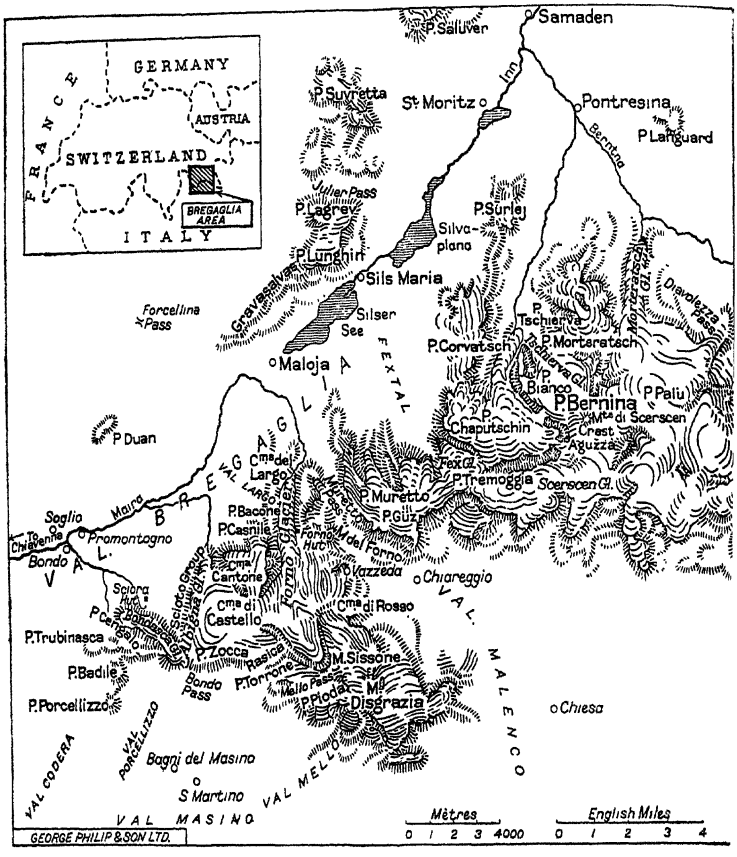
Andreas Fischer had intended to include in his projected mountain book a chapter on "*Herr* and Guide." He perished in the snow on the Aletschhorn, and it remained unwritten. Probably much of what Fischer had in mind is to be found here in Klucker's memoirs.

The first suggestion that he should write his own story came to Klucker from Dr. A. Janggen, of St.

Gallen, formerly President of the Swiss Alpine Club. I am especially indebted to him as well as to Georg Hartmann and Gian Fümm of Sils Maria, who handed over to me without hesitation all the writings that Klucker had left. Obviously not all of this material was ready for the printer, but I have acted entirely in accordance with the wishes of the author if here and there I have smoothed, abridged, or supplemented a little. For the biographical sketch I have used not only the memoirs, but also his numerous letters, in so far as they were accessible to me, and whatever he himself had told me, verbally and in writing, about his life.

ERNST JENNY.

ZOFINGEN, *July* 1930.



The home districts of Christian Klucker.
Sketch map of the Bregaglia Area and the Bernina Group.

CHAPTER I

THE YEARS OF MY YOUTH AND OTHER MATTERS

THE green Alpine vale of Avers, which joins the Hinter Rhein Valley above Andeer, is my homeland.

My father, Augustin Klucker (1805–1892), left his native valley about 1835, and settled at Bondo, in Val Bregaglia. There he married, and there six of his children were born. In 1850, my parents took over the farm, "Chesa nova," here in the Fextal. This Chesa nova is my birthplace, and I first saw the light on September 28th 1853.

To-day, as I write, I am the only one left of a family of ten, and perhaps I shall not have much longer to wait for my own summons.

At the early age of six I was set to work as cowherd, having to tend from twelve to fourteen head of cattle the whole summer long. I continued with this until the year 1868. The free life in God's lovely world of Nature, amongst the beautiful flowering pastures of the Fextal, was altogether to my liking, and it was not without reluctance that I handed over to my younger brother my job as herd-boy.

Even at that time, while minding the cattle, my favourite pastime was climbing. Not a single rock, however high or slippery, remained unassailed. And how many tall larches did I climb to the very top, in those days of boyhood! The usual consequence, of course, was that I got home with tattered clothing,

and then must be prepared for chastisement from my dear mother, who counted up the torn places in my trousers with the palm of her hand! A procedure more or less painful in proportion to the seriousness of the offence.

During the winter months, from October to the end of April, I attended school in Sils Maria—or, to be more exact, was obliged to attend—along with the other Fex children. This lasted from my eighth to the end of my fourteenth year.

At school I always remained a backward pupil. Writing and arithmetic were not in my line. For two winters I had to struggle and strive to get rid of my left hand in writing. I was left-handed, then, even with the pen. Shame, and possibly a touch of ambition, spurred me on to keep pace with my classmates. My weakest subject was German grammar, owing, possibly, to the detrimental influence of the Bregaglia dialect, which we had to use at home, and to the Upper Engadine idioms which are prevalent in the commune.

Singing and geography were my favourite subjects. While in the former I did not exactly equal Caruso, I nevertheless became a pretty fair tenor; and in geography I surpassed all my fellow-pupils. In those days, unfortunately, there were no gymnastic exercises at all in our primary schools. School-children were not even granted the short forenoon and afternoon break. They were simply cooped up in a stuffy schoolroom for three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, and instead of breathing as pure air as possible, they had the doubtful pleasure of swallowing the master's tobacco smoke. At that time, teachers were allowed to smoke even in the schoolroom, and ours made full use of the privilege. I may mention it as characteristic, that the pupil who finished his lessons

first was given a separate table where he had to keep himself busy cutting twist and stem tobacco for the master. This task, which, by the way, was not mentioned in the curriculum, frequently fell to me, as did also the filling of the pipe afterwards!

At the age of fifteen I stepped, as it were, into the first grade of the school of life, being sent to Samaden as apprentice to a master wheelwright named Jacob Kreis, a native of Thurgau. Master Kreis was a stern disciplinarian. Although given to outbursts of temper, he was sound in character and faithful to duty, and a first-rate workman at his craft. His excellent example and strict discipline did me no harm whatever, especially as I had been somewhat spoilt at home.

In the late autumn of 1872 I left Samaden and my master, and returned home to become a wheelwright on my own account. Master Kreis was against this, but his good counsel was wrecked upon the obstinate determination of my father and myself. Kreis thought that it would be more profitable for me to continue my apprenticeship with him for a year or two longer, or else to extend and complete my experience of the craft during another two years in one of the larger towns of Switzerland.

The fact that we were at that time about to acquire the small farm, my present home, may have induced my father to demand that I should give up my job in Samaden. What was later incomprehensible to me was his insistence upon the property being purchased in my name.

This was undoubtedly a serious mistake, and it was the eighteen-year-old, inexperienced wheelwright from the Fextal who had to suffer for it. The purchase of the property and the equipment of the workshop in Sils Baselgia burdened me with responsibilities which

I was quite unable to bear, and which brought me to the brink of financial ruin.

Being independent of "active civilian service" I joined the army in 1873, and although my height was a trifle below medium, I chose the Artillery, and was assigned to the Mountain Artillery. To the various "spurs" won during my years of service were finally added those of sergeant-major. A proud figure on his steed was the little sergeant-major from Fex in those days, and he was only chagrined when his horse bolted with him, or when at the command, "draw swords," he failed to extract his long sabre from its scabbard in less than three counts.

In this connection, I would confide to my friendly readers that in 1879 and 1880 I was about to become engaged to an honourable maiden from Thun. Lack of money on my side was the ostensible reason for the failure of this tender affair.[1] I still remember with mingled joy and sadness my years of service in Thun, and the gentle Anneli.

Remaining a bachelor, I have maintained a definite reserve toward the fair sex, although the sight of a nice, comely woman still affords me pleasure.

On November 1st 1880, I took charge of the Post Office at Fex, and with my niece as assistant held this ill-paid position for full seven-and-thirty years, retiring on January 1st 1918.

With the consent of the Postal Authorities, I directed the affairs of our commune, Sils-Engadine, with more or less skill and success from 1907 to 1909. I undertook these duties not so much to please myself as at the urgent request of my friends. In the year 1916,

[1] In private conversation, Klucker stated that he had not the courage to propose to her, as she was above him in social station.

this thorny honorary office was once more entrusted to me after the municipal ship had foundered, but in the spring of 1917 I gave it up for good.

In the capacity of Treasurer I served the school-welfare organization for full twenty years, holding office as President for one year only, just before my resignation. For the school, the teachers, and the dear young people I have ever since had a warm spot in my heart.

II

My Earliest Mountain Climbs

I made my first glacier expedition as early as 1862. It took me to the Chapütsch Pass (9,622 ft.) which, at that time, was an easy and much-used way from the Fextal to Val Malenco, in the Valtelline.

On a beautiful Sunday in July, after leaving the cattle in the care of my younger brother, I set off in the direction of the Fex Glacier with my companion, a seventeen-year-old seminary student from Fex, and reached the top of the pass after a pleasant walk over the unbroken glacier. The only crevasse we met with was the bergschrund [1] below the pass, and we turned it without danger.

This magnificent tour, and especially the view from the high pass into Val Malenco as far as Sondrio in the Valtelline, left an unforgettable impression on my mind.

In July 1865, when my father, with two English gentlemen and a guide, set out early one morning for the pass leading from the Fedoz valley to Chiareggio in Val Malenco, I was in my thirteenth year, and the

[1] The crevasse separating the highest portion of the glacier from the actual mountain above.

thought came to me, "when you are older and stronger you'll get yourself a rope and ice-axe like those of the Englishmen and their guide!" The two English gentlemen were the well-known mountaineers, D. W. Freshfield and F. F. Tuckett, accompanied by the Chamonix guide, François Dévouassoud, who on that day traversed the Fuorcla Fedoz.

It was a long wait for me until I owned my ice-axe and rope. On the other hand, from 1866 to 1869, every autumn in September, I was allowed to go chamois hunting with my father (unarmed, indeed), and these excursions led us very often on to the higher mountain-ridges and peaks round about. Thus we repeatedly went up to Furtschellas, Piz Led, Piz Güz, Piz Muretto, Fuorcla la Margna, and other heights.

Even during my apprentice years in Samaden I did not forget our mountains. On Sundays when the weather was fair I would climb with my friends, and now and again with my master, over Muottas Murail, Munt Müsellas, Piz Padella; or would roam through Val Bevers and across the Suvretta Pass or the Fuorcla Saluver to St. Moritz.

Every summer we visited the beautiful pyramid of Piz Ot which commands such splendid views, and likewise Piz Languard. The latter I remember climbing twice on one Sunday, the second time as paid guide to a German gentleman whom we met on our descent near Alp Languard and who requested me to take him to the top of Piz Languard.—That evening in Pontresina he gave me as recompense a ten-franc gold-piece!—a princely sum in my eyes at that time. "By Jove!" thought I, "at that rate, mountain climbing would be more lucrative than work as a paying apprentice in a workshop!"

The last and biggest mountain climb made during

my Samaden sojourn was that of the Tschierva (11,693 ft.). Although I could not muster any suitable companions, I decided to risk the enterprise. So one fine Sunday late in July 1872, I left Samaden at midnight, having provided myself with bread and cheese, and journeyed forth in good spirits toward the Roseg valley. Instead of going over Alp Misaun and along the Tschierva slopes, I climbed the Tschierva Glacier, and turning thence upward to the left across the polished rocks to the "Terrace," [1] I reached the top by 8 a.m.

How jubilant I felt that Sunday in July up on the high watch-tower of the Tschierva! I stayed on the summit for two hours, and was able to admire the splendid panorama at leisure. The mighty forms of Piz Roseg, Monte di Scerscen, the Bernina, and the Morteratsch, and the glittering Tschierva Glacier below, with its multitudinous fissures and ice-falls, were a feast for hungry eyes. I looked for a long time in wonder at the gigantic ice-walls of Monte di Scerscen and Piz Roseg which fell away, appallingly steep, and broken with cataracts of ice, to the upper Tschierva basin. I had no idea, that Sunday, that eighteen years later I should find my way over those ice-walls.

After an unsuccessful attempt to force a descent direct by the west face of the mountain, I returned home by the way I had come. Down in the Roseg valley I made the sorry discovery that I was footsore. Near Alp Seconda there was nothing for it but to discard my stockings and to make rather imperfect foot-wrappings out of my handkerchief. Limping, with blood-stained feet, I got back to Samaden at 4.30 that afternoon.

[1] The ordinary ascent to the Terrace leads up much further to the west.

III

A Guide in the Making

The following years, 1873–1875, were the saddest and unhappiest of my life. They showed me quite plainly that here also, in life's serious school, I was a very poor pupil. My jump from apprentice to master had been undertaken not only without proper calculation, but also without helpful guidance.

In the summer of 1874 I was battling with the adversities of life, lonely and forsaken! No friend, no counsellor and no help seemed to be within my reach. There was only one person in those evil days who would not leave me and whose trust in me remained unshaken, and that was my devoted mother. She was the only one who inspired me, in my misery, with the necessary courage and confidence, and saved me from utter despair. Never did a hard word pass her lips, although I could not help perceiving that under the prevailing circumstances she suffered intensely. She did not lose confidence in her son, since she naturally knew him better than did the cold, pitiless world. At that time I felt like a man on the verge of drowning! How different things are to-day!

My many troubles and disappointments often drove me out and up into my mountains, whither my heart was always turning. Thus, in 1873–1874 it came about that, with the exception of Piz Tremoggia and Piz Fora which as a solitary climber I could not tackle, I did most of the ascents in our local territory, thereby coming to know which routes were practicable. At the same time, these expeditions had a beneficial effect upon my spirits.

During the summer months of 1874 I was often engaged by private individuals in Sils Maria as well as through the "Alpenrose," the only hotel in Sils at that time which was equipped for the tourist trade. Thus it happened that, as so-called mountain guides were not to be had in our commune, I was kept busy both as guide and porter.

In August of the same summer I acted as guide to two kindly young German ladies. Our last ascent was the Forno Glacier, as far as the foot of Cima di Rosso. My companions developed a lively enthusiasm not only for the tour itself, but apparently for their guide as well, for on departing from Sils Maria, one of the two ladies—she was the young Countess v. Reichenbach—handed me a charming picture adorned with Alpine flowers and a dedication which ended with the words of the Psalmist:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth."

Dear Reader, these words set me thinking, and I mention them here purposely, because they were the real motive and indeed the basis of my career as a mountain guide. I thought "if my help is to come from the hills, I will try my fortune up there; down in the valley there will be no help, either material or moral, for me." The metamorphosis from wheelwright to guide occurred, then, in 1874.

The summer of 1875 saw me inaugurated as a full-fledged guide, armed with rope and ice-axe, and with the indispensable blackcock-feather stuck in my hat. For the rest, I possessed no official diploma, but was

ready for anything, and full of enthusiasm for the new profession.

I may mention that at that time, in the land of "Fry Rhätien," there was full "freedom of trade" for guides. The practice of this profession was not governed by any legal regulations or restrictions. Courses of instruction or training in guidecraft were unheard of. The young man who wanted to enter upon the vocation of guide and had the necessary physical qualifications, required nothing more than rucksack, axe and rope—then everything was in order, according to his idea. Patronage also played a part in those days.

It is true that in some places—especially in the Engadine—there were associations of guides which had their own regulations. But they were autonomous to such a degree, that they fixed independently the tariff for the guides within their district, and neither the S.A.C. nor the Cantonal and district authorities had any powers of interference. How arbitrary was the tariff may be best illustrated by the following example:

Before 1874 Sils-Engadine had already instituted a guides' tariff. It assigned for Piz la Margna a sum of not less than 40 francs, a preposterous amount for an easy expedition. The ascent took no more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 hours, so that the guide could usually be back in Sils Maria in the afternoon. I could well understand why no tourist felt inclined to try Piz la Margna, and therefore reduced the charge to 16 francs. The consequence was that in fine weather this mountain was climbed as often as four times a week.

When the Cantonal Guide Law at last came into being in 1907, there was general complaint from the guide-fraternity that this law involved gross inter-

ference with freedom of occupation as granted by the Federal Constitution. A strange point of view, which I was never able to share.

I should like to add the curious fact that from 1874 to 1908 I acted as guide without official qualification, my licence bearing the date of March 28th 1908.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTERS FROM MY LIFE AS A GUIDE
1874–1882

IT obviously does not fall within the scope of this feeble work of mine to relate in detail all the hundreds of mountain tours which I carried out with good fortune and practically without accident in the course of forty-eight years. The first period of my activity as guide I can pass over very briefly.

There were no extraordinary climbs to record during the first eight years. I was content with the customary tours near home. No notable Alpinists were ever moved to lose their way and turn up at the modest resort of Sils Maria. They preferred the large tourist centres, where they could be sure of meeting their own kind and where a capable staff of guides was available.

The tourists whom I then accompanied were, with few exceptions, Germans and Swiss who spent their holidays there. I may say without reserve that the large majority of these nature-lovers and mountain-lovers were people of a worthy, amiable sort whose considerate treatment and stimulating company tended to increase my love of the mountains and of my vocation, thus directing my eager spirit on right lines.

I still regard these first years as my apprenticeship in the profession. My spiritual balance gradually returned at the same time, and with it my lost confidence in my fellow-men.

Those whom I accompanied were not sportsmen in the strict sense of the word. They admired the won-

derful mountain scenery with me and enjoyed the world of nature in all its details; and if I acquired some knowledge of botany, geology, and such-like, its beginnings fall within those years of apprenticeship as a guide.

Nearly every mountain expedition brought me into contact with new people, and I endeavoured, as far as I could, to conform to their customs and wishes. This also gave me an opportunity of studying different characters, their faults and virtues.

The most frequent tours undertaken were Piz la Margna, Piz Corvatsch, Julier, Piz Lagrev, Piz Chapütschin, Piz Tremoggia, Piz Fora, etc. They often included, too, the crossings of the Fuorcla Fex and Fuorcla Chapütschin to the Roseg valley and Pontresina, or across the Chapütsch Pass and Tremoggia Pass to Chiesa in Val Malenco, as well as by the Lunghin-Forcellina route to Juf and Avers-Cresta. Now and again we climbed Piz Duan with its magnificent view, spending the night in Casaccia.

The Forno district hardly came into consideration at that time; for its lack of accommodation made this mountain group too long an expedition from Sils. Except for the Forno Glacier expeditions, only Monte Sissone, Cima di Rosso, and perhaps the crossing of the Casnile Pass to the Albigna valley came into question. If it proved at all possible to arouse a tourist's interest in the Bregaglia mountains, it was after an ascent of the Margna, as the Forno district is seen to great advantage from this peak.

I seldom went to Pontresina. Occasionally I took Sils tourists up Piz Languard and across the Diavolezza Pass, and once I went up Piz Morteratsch. At that time I gathered the impression that my Pontresina colleagues regarded the guide from Sils as of an

inferior sort, an observation that was confirmed later on. This snobbery and rivalry towards colleagues from another district seemed to me hard to understand. I shall revert to this subject in another place.

Three mountain tours in the Albigna–Disgrazia district may be touched upon briefly, as they were very important to me at the time. They all took me into the south-eastern and southern part of the Bregaglia–Masino group, and thus into a part of the Alps which was *terra incognita* for my companions as well as for myself.

In view of the confusion which then existed in regard to the naming of mountains and passes, and the lack of good maps, visits to these somewhat inaccessible parts involved disappointment and loss of time. The two guide-books issued in 1910 and 1911, *Climbers' Guide*, by Colonel E. L. Strutt, and *Guida delle Alpi Retiche Occidentali* of the Italian Alpine Club, brought some kind of order into this situation. I regard as particularly valuable and accurate the fourth volume of the S.A.C. Climbers' Guide, *Südliche Bergellerberge und Monte Disgrazia*, by H. Rütter, 1922.[1]

The first of these mountain tours, which lasted six days, I made in the company of Dr. R. Liechtenhahn, from Basle. On the 4th of August 1876 we went from Sils Maria across the Muretto Pass as far as the miserable chalets of Forbicina, near Chiareggio (Val Malenco), where we had to be content with a bed of hay in the near neighbourhood of a family of six squealing pigs. We left there a little before 5 a.m., ascending in a south-westerly direction through the stony Val Sissone to the western edge of the Disgrazia Glacier, always keeping before us the superb northern

[1] In the introduction to this volume, Herr Rütter pays a warm tribute to Klucker's help in its composition.

precipices of Monte Disgrazia. Since our journey that day was to take us over the Passo di Mello, into the Mello glen and on to Bagni del Masino, and since I knew that the crossing would have to be effected at the lowest dip of the rock-ridge between Monte Sissone and Pizzo Pioda, our line of approach was already indicated. As early as 9 a.m., after an easy walk across the Disgrazia Glacier, we stood at the foot of the rock-wall which flanks our pass to the north-east. In spite of the difficulties presented by the wide schrund between glacier and rock-wall, by 9.45 we were standing on the pass.

At that time there was still some confusion about the name of this pass. Sometimes it was called Piodajoch and sometimes Disgraziajoch, but not Passo di Mello. The correct name of the pass I found for the first time on the small map-drawing which was published in the year 1882 as supplement to the monograph by Count Francesco Lurani, *Le Montagne di Val Masino*. In my notes of the year 1876 appears the designation Disgraziajoch or Colle del Disgrazia. On the excursion map of the S.A.C. for 1895 we find the double name Passo di San Martino o di Mello.

During our halt on the Passo di Mello I found, protected by stones, an empty wine bottle containing a piece of paper with the names of the Englishmen, Tuckett, Freshfield and Buxton, who had used this passage on July 7th 1865, with their guides François Dévouassoud, Peter Michel and J. B. Walther.

The descent to San Martino took four hours. It led through the rough, but very interesting Valle di Mello, and later through the extremely narrow Val dei Bagni to our destination for that day, Bagni del Masino.

Since I knew from Gottlieb Studer's *Über Eis und Schnee* that English mountaineers had reached Piz

Cengalo, the highest point in Val Porcellizzo, direct from Bagni del Masino in less than five hours, I suggested to my *Herr* that we might spend the night of August 6th in Bagni del Masino and not attempt the Forcella di Bondo until the 7th. Dr. Liechtenhahn would not hear of this, because according to his itinerary we were to ascend to the uppermost chalets of Alp Porcellizzo in the afternoon of the 6th and spend the night in one of the cowherd's huts.

Unfortunately, we started from the so-called Stabilimento too late in the afternoon, and at the tree-limit were caught in a terrific thunderstorm. Wet to the skin, and thinking of the oncoming darkness, we sought shelter in a half-covered hut. After an uncomfortable night, and without having eaten any warm food, we set out at 7 a.m. towards the furthest slopes of Val Porcellizzo. Over steep grassy hillsides and watercourses we made our way up to the highest snowfields, which fall away southward from the frontier ridge. We selected the middle tongue of snow which, according to our calculation, must lead up to the Forcella di Bondo. On arrival at the point where the frontier ridge dips sharply, we were not a little disappointed to find that from this gap there would be no chance of descending to the Bondasca Glacier. Leaving my companion to rest here after breakfast, I scrambled eastward across the easy rock ridge as far as Point 3223 on the Lurani map. From here I had a good view of the south-east ridge as far as the Ferro Occidentale, and at once discovered the small notch at the west foot of the Ferro which indicates the pass. From where I stood one could have reached the Forcella di Bondo comfortably in an hour by descending to the small glacier which lay in front of it to the south.

I returned to Herr Liechtenhahn and reported my discoveries, but he declared emphatically that he was too tired that day to undertake the descent to the Forcella di Bondo and across the wildly broken Bondasca Glacier. He said he would rather give up crossing this pass and would prefer to spend the night on Alp Porcellizzo in order to proceed next day into Val Codera. We therefore went down again into Val Porcellizzo as far as the first inhabited chalet.

In order to husband our supplies, we made the cowherds cook us a fortifying "polenta" and provide us with fresh milk; and we spent a fine afternoon on the sunny, warm grass.

On August 8th we made an early start. Our way led westward as far as the Passo Sceroia, then turned abruptly down, over the Averta Alp, into Val Codera. While the noontide heat was greatest, we were rambling through the wild, romantic rock-valley of Codera. Probably the most trying stretch that day was the very steep zigzag path down to Novate (on Lago di Mezzola), which is the usual approach to Val Codera. A one-horse vehicle of questionable soundness and elegance brought us to Chiavenna on the same day. By the evening of August 9th we were back again in Sils Maria, after a wonderful tour through the Bregaglia and by way of Maloja.

I should like to make the following note in regard to the afore-mentioned Point 3223, west of the Forcella di Bondo:

The Italian Climbers' Guide marks this point with the name Cima del Passo, while E. L. Strutt in his *Climbers' Guide* calls it Pizzo di Bondo. In the S.A.C.'s *Die südlichen Bergellerberge* this rise in the ridge, which is unimportant for the mountaineer, is not named. In my opinion, Cima del Passo is a somewhat

vague designation, and Pizzo di Bondo can easily lead to confusion with the Monte di Bondo of the western end of the frontier chain.

The Italian Climbers' Guide states further, concerning this Cima del Passo, that it was first ascended by Ernesto Bontadini on August 11th 1898, and that Colonel Strutt carried out the first ascent by the south-eastern ridge on June 13th 1908.

On August 7th 1876,[1] I found, however, on this so-called Cima del Passo, the names of the Englishmen D. W. Freshfield, F. F. Tuckett and H. E. Buxton, who had, with their three guides, François Dévouassoud, Peter Michel and J. B. Walther, reached this point on July 8th 1865, while searching for the Forcella di Bondo. It may safely be assumed then, that the Freshfield party came in 1865 to the same low gap in the ridge that we ourselves reached eleven years later. And it is just as likely that in proceeding further they crossed the mountain in the direction of the Forcella di Bondo. The conclusion is, therefore, that the above-mentioned Englishmen were the first climbers, and not E. Bontadini, and that the second ascent was made by my humble self on August 7th 1876.

My next expedition to the south side of the Bregaglia group was with Giuseppe Galimberti of the C.A.I., and took place on August 20th 1879. It led by Maloja to the Forno Glacier, and by way of Monte Sissone down into Valle di Mello. By the now familiar route, we reached San Martino and Bagni del Masino. A superb trip it was, accomplished in fourteen hours under a cloudless sky, with a man who was both a nature-lover and a good companion.

[1] This date is given as August 2nd 1875 in Herr Rütter's Climbers' Guide, p. 140, on Klucker's own information.

In Bagni del Masino I had the honour of making the acquaintance of Count Francesco Lurani, the pioneer of the Masino group, and a notable figure in Alpine literature. With him was his guide, Antonio Baroni, a young, vigorous and kindly fellow, from whom I gathered much valuable information regarding the topography and nomenclature of the surrounding district.

As Signor Galimberti was on his way homeward, I had to undertake the return trip by myself and had selected the passage across the Fuorcla di Zocca into the Albigna valley. Signor Galimberti did not favour this route and would have preferred my returning by way of Ardenno, Colico, Chiavenna—a roundabout way which did not appeal to me. Being eager to get a good view of the southern aspect of the Torrone–Castello–Zocca frontier range and the far side of the Albigna valley, I kept to my own plan.

In the early morning of August 21st, I returned to Valle di Mello via San Martino. Near Cascina Piana I found without difficulty the very steep footpath which leads up towards the left to Alp Zocca. During the following four or five hours my climb led me into unknown territory, and this doubled my enjoyment. Furthermore, the glimpses I was able to get into the formation of this magnificent granite group were, for me, very instructive. A tramp of about 5½ hours brought me to the Fuorcla di Zocca, formerly called also Forcella di San Martino.

I knew that the Italian smugglers who used this passage always crossed the upper basin of the Albigna Glacier without a rope, so I was not troubled about the stretch of glacier which lay before me. After an easy walk down the Albigna Glacier, by noon I was at the eastern corner of the glacier tongue, at the

point where the Cantone glacier-stream flows in from the east. A descent to Nasarina in Val Bregaglia with the consequent walk to Maloja by the dusty main road did not suit my fancy. Hence I regarded the two-hour ascent to the Casnile Pass as the better alternative. Starting about noon for the Casnile I reached the pass a little after 2 p.m. Continuing by way of the Forno Glacier and Cavloccio, I reached Maloja in 3½ hours, and at 7.20 p.m. I was back in Fex.

Later I calculated from the map the differences in altitude which I covered on August 21st 1879, with the following approximate result: From Bagni del Masino to Fex, in ascent 8,750 feet, in descent 6,500 feet.

The third tour to the valleys of Masino followed a year later. It was made in company with the same Signor Galimberti, and took us once more across the Fuorcla di Zocca to San Martino and Bagni del Masino.

We started from Vicosoprano at 4 a.m. on August 4th 1880, and reached the Albigna Glacier at 7.30. Shortly afterwards we got into thick mist, and my comrade expressed doubts about going farther, suggesting that we might not be able to find the Fuorcla di Zocca at all under such conditions. But although this exceedingly unwelcome and troublesome escort did not leave us until we reached Alp Zocca, we found the crossing without loss of time, and were at the top by 10 a.m. While we were descending to San Martino the horizon cleared visibly, and at 3 p.m. we entered Bagni del Masino under a cloudless sky.

Once again I had the honour of meeting Count Lurani there, and of conversing with him. He told me about a number of the climbs he had made, and others that he had in prospect. He did not, however,

mention the Torrone Orientale, and I did not refer to it either. He told me further that he had the intention and was taking preliminary steps to publish a topographical sketch, aiming to rectify as far as possible the nomenclature of this frontier group. I regret to say that this was the last time I saw this noble and charming person.

On leaving Bagni del Masino, my companion, Signor Galimberti, handed me a testimonial in regard to my qualifications which went far beyond the facts: he set forth how well-informed his guide was in regard to this mountain group—how he knew all the passes and peaks; and how amazing it had been to see him find the Fuorcla di Zocca in spite of thick mist.

For my return journey on August 5th I selected a different route from that over the Fuorcla di Zocca. I knew there was an easy way leading over from the far side of Val Codera into Vallone Trubinasca and Val Bondasca, a path often used by Italian smugglers; so all I had to do was to hunt for a point of crossing in the rock ridge that separates Val Porcellizzo from Val Codera, in order to establish a connection with the first-named pass (now called Bocchetta Trubinasca). Count Lurani advised me to look for this passage directly north of Pizzo Porcellizzo.

I reached this gap at 9 a.m. on August 5th, after a five hours' climb from Bagni del Masino. After a loss of altitude of nearly 1,700 feet and a further ascent of 700 feet, I stood 1½ hours later on the Bocchetta Trubinasca, where I rested until shortly before noon.

The descent to Promontogno, which is rough and very steep, led to Alp Trubinasca and thence to the left along the wooded slope interspersed with gullies, to Alp Luvartic. Descending further, I passed the chalets of Cugian and reached the bottom of Val

Bondasca near Punt Marlun. By 3 p.m. I was in Promontogno, abundantly satisfied with all the good things that eyes and heart had revelled in on this *Wanderung*.

Leaving Promontogno at 3.30 I got back to my Fex at 9 p.m., and no walk ever went more against the grain than the one that afternoon by the dusty main road, through Maloja to Sils.

The heights I had to make were: in ascending (Promontogno–Fex inclusive), 10,000 feet, in descending, 7,500 feet.

As already mentioned, these three tours in the Disgrazia–Bregaglia district were very valuable in connection with my later work in that region. I obtained a good insight, as it were, into the whole group, from the Disgrazia to Val Codera. By the study of Studer's *Über Eis und Schnee* and other Alpine literature, I extended my knowledge. And when, in the 'eighties and 'nineties of the last century I was able to visit that district more often, I knew pretty well what might still exist in the way of new climbs.

My cherished wish to climb one day the highest summit of the Bernina group, Piz Bernina, was fulfilled in the summer of 1882.

Early in July, R. Paulcke, a chemist from Leipzig, and his family, came to Sils Maria for a prolonged stay. I had the pleasure of accompanying this excellent mountaineer on his tours. His nine-year-old son, who was also with us on two of the expeditions, namely Piz la Margna and Piz Tremoggia, is now Professor Dr. W. Paulcke of Karlsruhe, an accepted authority on Alpine matters. At that time I had no idea that this light-footed young recruit would shortly rise to be an independent mountaineer and ski-runner.

Twenty-one years later, on August 4th 1903, I ran across my dear pupil of former days in the Tschierva Hut. And two days later he proved to me what he could do in the mountains by climbing Piz Bernina by the Scharte with two of his friends. That this guideless accomplishment was an outcome of " playing Klucker " in 1882, I can hardly assume, as the instruction had been rather too short.

After the training climbs on Margna and Tremoggia, R. Paulcke asked me one day whether I should be willing to take him up Piz Bernina. He wanted to make this climb with his young mountaineer friend, Alexander Rzewuski, from Davos. Although I had not as yet been up Piz Bernina I did not have to think the matter over for very long, and assented with pleasure. Herr Paulcke notified his friend in Davos, and at my considered desire, engaged a good local guide in Pontresina called Hans Grass, father of the well-known young guide, Chaspar Grass.

Rzewuski appeared, bringing regular Bernina weather. After the necessary preparations, we drove to Pontresina on July 18th, and the same evening we were with our Hans Grass in the old Boval Hut.

In the early hours of July 19th, in clear weather and by dim lantern light, we started for the ill-famed Labyrinth. What I liked even less than the choice of our route was the fact that we were joined by a German acquaintance and his St. Moritz guide, who had passed the night with us in the Boval Hut.

Thus six of us entered the Labyrinth tied together by two connected ropes. Hans Grass, however, led us in a masterly way through the maze of the ice-fall and up to the so-called Sass del repos. And just as calmly and surely did he guide us over the long east ridge up to the highest peak (13,304 ft.).

Oh, the splendour and grandeur of the scenery spread out to our view from this lofty height! If ten years ago, as a youth of 19 on Piz Tschierva, I had been thrilled by the panorama of the upper Roseg valley, I was far more so now on the Bernina, nearly 1,700 feet higher. The majestic mountain forms which stood round about us in their armour of ice held my gaze and my attention far more than the bewildering multitude of peaks in the distance.

We were roused from our meditation by exultant shouts from the direction of Piz Prievlus. On closer inspection we were able to descry three or four persons moving about, and Hans Grass declared that they were the two Englishmen, J. B. Wainewright and Pennington Legh, who had on that day scaled this mountain for the first time from the Tschierva side, in the company of his elder brother Christian and his uncle Hans.

As we roped ourselves together for the descent, my axe, by an unlucky mishap, was hurled into the abyss through an awkward handling of the rope. It was not easy to work my way down without an axe, but my sturdy arms and legs tided me over all awkward passages. The steep glacier slope immediately below the ice-fall in the Labyrinth presented some difficulty, as an ice avalanche had swept away the steps we had cut that morning. "Ghastly place!" I thought, and at the same moment there came to my mind unbidden the accident of Paul Güssfeldt with Hans Grass on September 5th 1869. With broken ribs and battered limbs, they had barely escaped with their lives. It seems strange to me that in his book, *In den Hochalpen*, in the chapter "Ein Gletscherabenteuer," Güssfeldt makes no comment whatsoever upon this perilous Bernina route. And I regard it as inexcusable that

there are still guides and their employers who select this extremely dangerous way to Piz Bernina. The short-cut is so insignificant that it should be forbidden to every insured guide.

The remainder of the descent went smoothly. By early afternoon we were back at the Boval Hut.

Shortly after our successful Bernina climb, I was able to persuade R. Paulcke to attempt the Torrone Orientale (10,915 ft.), of the yet untrodden Torrone chain, a peak distinguished for its beautiful shape. Paulcke was the more ready to agree, as Alexander Rzewuski was greatly taken with the idea of making a first ascent.

Everything was made ready, but the weather refused to become settled and fine. At last, on July 28th, we started for Alp Cavloccio, where we encamped for the night, and on the 29th we achieved the ascent—my earliest first ascent in the wonderful granite mountains of Bregaglia.[1]

[1] For the details of this first ascent, see Alexander Rzewuski's article, "Die erste Besteigung des Pizzo Torrone," in the 19th Year Book of the S.A.C., 1884.

CHAPTER III

MY FIRST DISGRAZIA CLIMB

THE memory of my expedition of August 4th 1886, over Monte Sissone to the steep slopes of Monte Disgrazia, and of the stormy night that followed—with all its accompaniments, serious as well as comic—has remained as vivid in my mind as if it were a recent event, although thirty-seven years have passed since that day.

During that beautiful summer I met several times a great tall man, an English General Haig, at the home of the classical philologist, Johann Caviezel, in Sils Maria. He spent his long vacation in Maloja and often conferred with Caviezel in the course of his study and research in the Romansch language. He was a giant, and his height—about six-foot-six—was out of proportion to his girth.

At the end of July I met this huge man once more in Sils Maria. He asked me whether I would like to go with him to Monte Disgrazia within the next few days, his own guide and usual companion, Jacob Ufer, having already given his assent. His idea was to reach the peak from Maloja, and to spend the night in the small hut on the so-called Punta Siber-Gysi, so as to be able to admire the sunrise on the following morning! I could not help pointing out to the worthy General, who appeared so confident, that as a rule I did not undertake the longer and harder mountain climbs before knowing the capabilities of my companions, and that furthermore, I considered

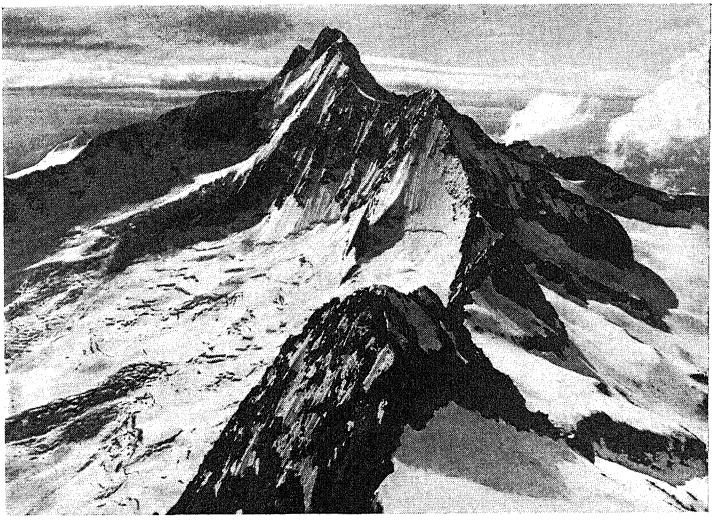
it rather risky to spend the night on the summit of the mountain in view of a possible sudden change in the weather during the night, and the fact that the difficulties of the descent all lay concentrated below the hut. I told him that such mousetraps at that altitude—where a human being might at any time become the plaything of the forces of nature—were not to my liking. Also that a direct ascent from Maloja to the peak, including the crossing of Monte Sissone, would involve no less than fifteen hours' march, mainly in the heat of the day. But at that moment the good General played the rôle of a seasoned mountaineer, who was experienced in difficult mountain climbs; and the result was that I foolishly gave my consent. Six days later I should have acted differently.

Just a few words about the Disgrazia Hut of that day. This exceedingly small and primitive shelter, built into the rock barely twenty feet below the top of the Punta Siber-Gysi to the southward, bore the name "Capanna Maria," and had been erected in or about the year 1884 by Italian engineers, when they were engaged in making topographical measurements on the neighbouring Disgrazia summit. The simple wooden shed measured about ten feet in length, and a little more than six feet in width. A small bench, capable of seating four persons, had been fixed at the side toward the mountain. The inventory consisted of: 4 blankets, 1 small spirit-cooker with saucepan, 4 cups, and a few soup-spoons. On completion of the topographical measurements the hut was presented to the C.A.I. as a gift. How long a structure of this kind will weather the elements at such a height may be gathered from the fact that only two years later I found it in ruins.

On August 3rd 1886, the weather looked promising, and our Disgrazia tour was therefore fixed for the following day. In the early morning I left Fex for Maloja, where I met the General and my colleague Jacob Ufer (unlicensed like myself), busy with preparations for the start. Unfortunately, it was as late as 6 a.m. before everything was ready and we could set out with our heavy burdens in the direction of the Forno Glacier. The stretch over the Forno Glacier was, for me at least, no new experience; and the three hours' climb to Monte Sissone (10,928 ft.) in the noon-day heat proved very toilsome.

During our well-earned rest on the summit, which we spun out to an hour, I called my companions' attention to gathering thunderclouds. They only laughed at me, and pronounced the outlook quite harmless. However, we had not quite covered the 1,500 feet descent from the Sissone to the small Pioda Glacier before we were caught in the thick of the storm, and being without protection had to take it as it came. The bad weather blew over pretty quickly, as it happened, though not until we had been well chilled by hail and rain. We decided to march on. The ascent over the Pioda Glacier in slushy snow was very unpleasant. And what I did not like was to observe that the General's long legs were not responding very well, the halts he demanded becoming more and more frequent.

Higher up, at the passage from the small Pioda Glacier to the Preda Rossa Glacier—in the Italian Climbers' Guide designated as Passo Cecilia—I pointed out to our General that it might be wiser for him to descend to the Cecilia Hut and to make the attempt, weather permitting, on the following day. I also remarked that he seemed to me to be either unwell or



J. Gaberell, Thalwil

MONTE DISGRAZIA

From the summit of Monte Sissone



J. Gaberell, Thalwil

LOOKING SOUTH-WEST FROM PIZ BERNINA

In foreground, Bernina-Scerscen ridge ; middle distance, Lower Scerscen Glacier and Val Malenco ; in background, Monte Disgrazia

exhausted, and that we might take it for granted that the enjoyment of the sunset that day from the summit of the Disgrazia was out of the question. The weather was getting worse again. But it was of no use. He insisted wilfully on continuing the ascent, promising however to do his best to go faster. To me it was clear that we should not reach the little hut by daylight.

After crossing the upper Preda Rossa Glacier, we entered upon the south-west slope of the Disgrazia. From now on I was kept busy enough. In spite of arduous step-cutting, the pace became slower and slower and the pauses for rest more frequent and longer. Time was passing, and the dusk of evening came upon us with unwelcome swiftness. And the weather—looked ominous.

On reaching the last snow slope which leads steeply up to the western arête of the Punta Siber-Gysi, something occurred which made our situation desperate. Our General suddenly collapsed as if struck by a deadly bomb! I was at his side at once and was able to assure myself that he was alive; his pulse was perceptible, although very rapid. It was quite obvious, however, that he would not be in marching condition for hours to come, and that if a cold snowstorm should set in, the dread catastrophe would not be long delayed. We should have to act quickly: first of all the blankets would have to be fetched down from the hut.

My young colleague, who, by the way, was as sturdy as an oak, was trembling in every limb and had lost his head completely. I roused him to action by directing him to find a better resting-place for our General. Thereupon I climbed as quickly as possible up to the hut. It was already growing dark as I made

my way up along the snow-ridge to the Punta Siber-Gysi. Arrived at the hut, I found thick ice on the floor and over the little narrow bench. Of the four blankets, two were dry and fit for use, the others were frozen to the bench. Quickly I snatched up the two blankets and the cooker, and marched off. In flurries of snow I climbed carefully over the ridge down to the snow-slope and so to my companions. According to Ufer's statement, I had been away scarcely half an hour.

Under shelter of one of the blankets, the spirit-cooker was put into operation, and with wine and sugar we brewed a kind of mulled wine which we forced down our patient's throat. To my question, where it hurt him, he made no reply, and when I offered him a piece of roast meat, he refused it with a vigorous gesture. Withal he groaned incessantly. There was a good supply of his underclothing at hand, and we wrapped him in that. There were even a woollen jacket, dry mittens and a *passe-montagne*. The blanket served as an outer covering. The whole was bound with our rope—a long bundle—and anchored to a spike of rock.

After taking some food and drink, we made ready for the night. The prospects for a peaceful one were very remote. Resting half on lumpy rock and half on snow directly above the abyss ; above us, the steep snow-slope from which the drifting snow kept blowing down ; and to the left, the incessant groaning of our patient—truly our situation was not one to inspire us to rollicking Alpine song. We placed the second blanket with one end tucked over our heads, and the rest of it so disposed that it covered us as far as the knees. In a very short time I was sound asleep. I must confess, the trudging through the snow, the

step-cutting and the heavy rucksack had made me very tired.

It might have been about one o'clock in the morning, when I was awakened by a peculiar and, to me, unintelligible muttering. I asked my colleague where the sound came from, what was the trouble, and whether he was not feeling well. To which he replied in a tearful voice that he was saying his Paternoster. And then he began to blubber like a schoolboy with his ears boxed, lamenting that he should never see his dear wife and children again, because we were certainly doomed, and our *Herr* already near breathing his last. This behaviour of my colleague annoyed me intensely. I gave him to understand that, although unmarried, I also had poor relatives to support, but that my trust in God and myself was such that I did not regard our situation as so desperate as he did, and that I preferred to leave the blubbering to schoolboys. Finally, I suggested that he was demanding of the Madonnas and Saints far too great a feat of strength, if he expected them to help us unhurt down the walls of the Disgrazia.

That was too much for my colleague's faithful piety, and I had no choice but to moderate my talk, or some violence might have ensued, and I was in no mood for that. "My dear Jacob," I said soothingly, "let us drop the subject! Undoubtedly you are a better Christian than I. But just now I feel miserably cold and we ought to be able to get a bit warmer." Only then did I become aware that we were covered not only with our blanket, but also with drifted snow. My boots were as hard as flint, and my gaiters frozen to my trousers. Ufer remarked that he had not been able to sleep at all on account of the cold.

We crept out from under the blanket and shook off the snow. Ufer then told me that a full bottle of cognac had been packed up with our provisions. "The deuce there is! That'll make us a fine grog!" Under the shelter of the blanket we cautiously set the spirit-cooker going, pouring a generous measure of the best brandy into the saucepan. The result worked wonders. Our patient was not dead, but swallowed the strong, hot drink with avidity. We crept once more under the blanket and, leaving my colleague to continue his prayers, I soon fell asleep again.

At daybreak we crept forth, and quickly made our plans for the descent. While Ufer prepared a fresh portion of grog, I removed the various wrappings from our General. Then I rubbed and massaged him vigorously until his stiff limbs grew warm and became more flexible. Having finished the warm grog, we packed up, and after a final repetition of instructions about the method of descending, we carefully made our way downwards in driving snow. Jacob Ufer went first, and, supported by the rope, had the task of clearing the steps we had cut on the ascent. The General followed, crawling backwards and sliding; and the Heretic brought up the rear.

Under these conditions, the descent from the walls of the Disgrazia that morning was a laborious, difficult and tedious business. All three of us thanked our lucky stars when, after a full three hours, we reached and crossed the bergschrund at the foot of the face.

Below the bergschrund, where the snow-slope formed a small tongue of snow, we stopped, and spreading our blankets upon the snow, we seated our General upon them and tied them round him with the rope at hips and feet. From now on we went at a smart pace down to the Preda Rossa Glacier, Ufer

leading, and I, for safety's sake, following at some distance behind. During this part of the tour Jacob Ufer showed himself to be a capital draught-horse! Eagerness to get home to his wife may also have been a factor.

Our General was hard put to it to accomplish the ascent from the glacier to the Passo di Corna Rossa, which we had to cross to get to Chiesa. But by giving him plenty of support we succeeded in about an hour's time in reaching the pass, and therewith the badly neglected Corna Rossa Hut. Our *Herr* lay down and slept as best he could on the scanty hay of the bunk for nearly an hour. Meanwhile we cleaned out one of the heavy cooking utensils that were there and proceeded to cook a good, strong soup, which put new strength into the General. The two blankets and the spirit-cooker were safely stowed away in the hut, and not until we had thoroughly recovered our strength did we undertake the descent through Val Torreggio to Chiesa. Our General bore up very well, so that we reached the Albergo Olivo in Chiesa by 8 p.m. On the same evening the guide Schenatti was informed about the blankets and the spirit-cooker, and was given the money for restoring these articles to the place where they belonged. But the things never saw the Capanna Maria again.

On August 6th we travelled at an easy pace toward the Muretto Pass. In the Muretto valley we halted now and again, to admire the beautiful, imposing form of Monte Disgrazia. What sentiments it may have evoked in the General may be left to the imagination of the reader.

Early in the afternoon we were back in Maloja. When the time came for the payment of our fees, Ufer received his share in my presence, and the General

addressed to him the following blunt remark: "This time I was not at all satisfied with your performance. During the terrible night on the Disgrazia face you behaved like a schoolboy." Evidently the General, in spite of his prostration, had been able to follow something of our conversation that night, although we had spoken rather excitedly and in the Romansch tongue.

At parting, the Englishman shook me by the hand and said, "You were right: one should not set out on difficult undertakings with tourists whose capabilities are unknown!"

In conclusion: Who and what was good old Ufer? He was a carpenter and a farmer—anything but a mountain guide. When you pass through the Grabenstrasse in Chur you will see the beautiful monument to Benedikt Fontana, by the sculptor Kissling, which stands opposite the Cantonal building. As model for this heroic figure the artist chose our Jacob Ufer!

CHAPTER IV

CLIMBS WITH THEODOR CURTIUS

Sils Maria
Ohne Klucker
Ist wie Kaffee
Ohne Zucker.
TH. CURTIUS.

THE year 1883 was significant for me and my future. It brought me into contact with someone whom I have to thank much for my development both as guide and as man. This person, Theodor Curtius by name, I shall remember to the end of my days with the highest esteem and reverence.

It was Curtius who first took me on mountain tours outside the Engadine and Bregaglia. With him I visited the Valais, the Bernese Oberland, and the Dolomites. Thus I came to know other districts and mountains, other people, their ways and customs. Through his articles in the Year Books of the S.A.C.[1] the attention of climbers was drawn not only to his guide, but—what was more important—to the unknown Sils and Bregaglia mountains.

Just as Count Francesco Lurani, his predecessor, opened up the southern side of the Bregaglia, so on the northern side of the Bregaglia frontier ridge it

[1] In regard to our first ascents in the Bacone Group as well as in the Sciora chain, I would refer to the descriptions of Dr. Curtius in vols. 19, 21, 23 and 24 of the S.A.C.'s Year Book, under the titles "Erinnerungen an Sils Maria," "Aus der Gruppe des Bacone," "Die Cima del Largo" and "Die Pizzi di Sciora."

was Curtius who made the real beginnings in exploring step by step this scarcely trodden granite group. It may be mentioned at this point that of the forty-five to fifty summits and teeth on Swiss territory, hardly ten had been ascended before 1880.

On the evening of August 18th 1883, shortly after the arrival of this remarkable man in Sils Maria, I made his acquaintance. The simple, manly bearing and the open, kindly countenance of this young scholar made me realize at once that I had to do with no mere average person.

For the first two expeditions, which he undertook for training, he had with him my younger colleague Johann Eggenberger as guide, since I had already been engaged by young Bernus from Frankfurt. As early as August 21st, Curtius and my *Herr* agreed together to attempt, with Eggenberger and myself, at least one of the better climbs. The choice fell upon an ascent of Piz Bernina from the south; with this in view, by the evening of August 22nd we had already traversed the Fex-Scerscen Pass (now simply Scerscen Pass), and reached the Marinelli Hut erected in 1880 by the Valtellina Section of the C.A.I. to the east of the Upper Scerscen Glacier. On August 23rd we climbed Piz Bernina, and avoiding the Labyrinth and Loch, we descended by way of the Fortezza (Festung) to Morteratsch, the journey back to Sils being made at night. During this Bernina tour I found that Curtius was a splendid climber, far ahead of my young Frankfurter.

Soon after the wonderful Bernina expedition, we discussed the possibility of making an attempt upon one of the many virgin peaks in the Forno-Albigna district. For the present it seemed well to turn our attention to the least remote group, that of the Bacone-

Largo. My proposal to tackle Piz Bacone first was accepted, and it was decided to start out direct from Sils Maria very early on the morning of August 27th. The first ascent of this magnificent granite pyramid which we accomplished that day was successful in every way. The ascent was made from the Forno Glacier, over the north-east face and east ridge of the mountain; and by descending the south chimney and south gully we combined the first traverse of the Bacone. At 4 p.m. we were back in Maloja after an absence of 13 hours 30 minutes.

Two days later, at 7.30 a.m. on August 29th, Curtius, Eggenberger and I stood once more on the snow saddle of the Fex-Scerscen Pass, with the intention of carrying out the new ascent of Piz Glüschaint by the long south-west ridge. This expedition, which is one of the most beautiful of the Sils region, was completely successful. With our keen companion Curtius we reached the peak from Sils Maria on August 29th 1883, in the short space of seven hours, including halts—a performance which I have never equalled on any of my later repetitions of this climb.

Unfortunately, bad weather with snowfall set in during the first days of September, so that we were unable to attempt the still untouched Cima del Largo in the Bacone region. Soon after that Curtius departed, promising, however, to return.

In the summer of 1884 Curtius was not able to get to his beloved mountains. In August–September 1885, however, we were glad to welcome him again as our guest.

On August 22nd, we started from Sils Maria, the two of us alone, for the Bacone group with the object of exploring the approach to the highest Largo peak. We ascended from the Forno Glacier to the broad

saddle of the Forcola del Largo, so as to get a better survey of the north face of the mountain, which sweeps down into Vallone del Largo. But it soon became evident that it was no use looking for a way to the highest summit over these northern slopes and walls, and so we went up direct from the saddle to the south-eastern lower summit, a difficult climb in places. I attempted alone to reconnoitre the connecting ridge to the summit tower of the highest Largo peak, but with no success, as further advance was unsafe without a second climber.

Therefore we scaled only this lower summit, and descended easily southward to the Forcola del Bacone, and thence direct to the valley again.

In his description of our climbs in the Bacone group in the S.A.C. Year Book, Theodor Curtius alludes to my collar, which rather superfluous item of guide's attire I left lying at the point where we turned to go back. I must add as an odd coincidence that on October 4th 1921, when I climbed Cima del Largo with my young friend Rico Blattmann from Wädenswil, I found it again, quite intact, in a niche just below the spot where it had been discarded. So for six-and-thirty years this collar had lain buried under snow at the foot of the summit tower, hidden away from the eyes of climbers. It has now passed into the possession of my friend Curtius.

At 8.25 a.m. on August 27th, Curtius and I were for the second time within six days on the Forcola del Bacone. Our object was, by scaling the north ridge from this point, to ascend Piz Bacone from a new quarter. After a sharp but very stimulating climb of a little over 1½ hours we reached the summit. It was easy to establish the fact that this peak had remained untouched since our first ascent of August

27th 1883. This, then, was the second ascent, by a new way. The descent was made through the south chimney to the small Casnile Glacier. After a beautiful walk through the Albigna valley, we reached Vicosoprano by way of Sassprimavera a little after 6 p.m.

From Casaccia, on September 1st, Curtius and I crossed the Forcola del Largo for the first time, by way of the upper half of Vallone del Largo. The terrible ravine and the threatening weather had oppressed our spirits, and we drew a breath of relief when at 2.40 p.m. we set foot upon the broad saddle of the Forcola del Largo. Our ascent through the dark gorge had taken almost five hours. In connection with this crossing, we ascended the hitherto unclimbed Cima di Spluga from the Forcola. At 7 p.m. we were safely back in Maloja.

For September 3rd and 4th our programme included a no less ambitious item than the ascent of the Crast' Agüzza, to be made from the Marinelli Hut by the south face of the mountain.

Early on September 3rd we went up to the Fex-Scerscen Pass. We left our baggage at the pass, and in fulfilment of a long-cherished wish of Curtius, we climbed to the superb dolomite top of Piz Tremoggia which is easily accessible from the pass. Rather early in the evening we entered the Marinelli Hut, where, as the sole visitors, we spent some pleasant hours, qualified only by the doubtful weather.

A survey made in the small hours of September 4th showed that all the surrounding peaks were already lost in clouds, while high aloft a storm was raging. At daybreak we crawled forth, and as the weather had grown worse, if anything, we deliberated upon our next move. There was not much sense in holding out until the following morning, as the

rocks of the higher mountains already showed freshly fallen snow. Retreat it must be! But which way? Finally we decided to take the shortest cut to the Fextal, i.e. the Fex-Scerscen Pass.

After the enjoyment—if that word is appropriate under the circumstances—of an exceedingly rich soup (we had sacrificed a good half of an ox-tongue and at least half a jar of Liebig's Extract of Beef to it) we set forth in the direction of the Lower Scerscen Glacier. On arrival there we held a council of war in earnest. My companion expressed some doubt as to whether in view of the prevailing mist and storm we should be able to reach the Fex-Scerscen Pass at all. My self-confidence did not waver on September 4th 1885, and we continued on our way. Although our tracks of the previous day had been blurred and blown away by the storm, I found my way, and my companion followed undismayed.

The direction of the crevasses and the occasional sound of falling stones from the rock walls of the Sella and Glüschaint which flanked our way on the north, kept us from going astray, even though we could seldom see the route on account of the dense mist. The nearer we approached to the pass, the fiercer raged the storm, so that the last hour up to the pass, and a half hour beyond it on the Fex side, were decidedly unpleasant. The storm whipped the snow and ice splinters with such force against our heads, that we arrived in the Fextal with badly swollen faces and necks. A walk through the Fextal to Sils in the pouring rain gave the last touch to this abortive Crast' Agüzza expedition. But undoubtedly it was the fortifying soup we ate in the Marinelli Hut that we had to thank for our sturdy resistance to the raging blizzard over the Fex-Scerscen Pass.

For the first fine day after the tour just described we had planned an ascent of Piz Julier. To this end we set out one morning by way of Fratta to the Julier road. But not far from the wayside hut, where the Piz Julier route turns off the main road to the right, we were forced to seek shelter under a large boulder from a very heavy downpour. We waited long for an improvement in the weather, but finally had to give up the Julier climb. In order, however, to make our return by a different way from that by which we had come, we decided, after the weather had improved a little, to use for our passage to Sils the Polaschin Pass, in the Lagrev group, which as yet was unknown to mountaineers. This crossing concluded my mountain tours with Curtius in 1885.

The approach of August, 1887, brought to us our dear Curtius once again. As he had some big plans up his sleeve, we arranged a training climb as soon as possible, and ascended Piz Corvatsch by the west ridge, descending by the south ridge towards Fuorcla Fex and down to the Lej Sgrischus.

August the 12th was the day fixed for a new exploration of Cima del Largo, this time from the west, from the small Bacone Glacier. With this object in view we stood as early as 8.15 a.m. on the Forcola del Bacone. After a brief rest, we descended westward to the Bacone Glacier—a loss in altitude of about 250 feet. From there, clambering up over the south-west wall, we reached the gap between the central and the western Largo peaks and thence, very quickly, the central peak. Standing here, we were scarcely 100 feet away from the western arête of the highest Largo summit, being separated from it by a gap 50–70 feet in depth. After a thorough scrutiny of this airy ridge of the main peak, we came to the

conclusion that it would be a sheer impossibility to scale that rock-ridge. To turn the ridge on right or left by means of the faces appeared to us out of the question. The lower part of the ridge, with its sheer drop of 70 feet, almost overhung the gap, and afforded no hold for hand or foot. The left face overlooking Vallone del Largo seemed unapproachable, and the right face, dropping less precipitously toward the Bacone Glacier, offered no possibility of ascent because of its smooth and holdless nature. Above the vertical step in the ridge I noticed a crack in the rock which ran out by the overhang and extended further up from the ridge to the right face (as viewed from our point of vantage). Barbaria and I found this part of the ridge in the same condition when we accompanied Anton von Rydzewski up the central Largo peak on June 27th 1891, with the difference, moreover, that we examined this ridge from the gap itself.

It does not seem inopportune to give a detailed description of that part of the ridge in view of the fact that the articles and notes published in the Year Books of the S.A.C. by Curtius as well as by Rydzewski have, after the actual crossing of the Largo from east to west in 1906 and from west to east in the summer of 1909, been criticized and derided. I found even in the Forno Hut-book of 1906 a derogatory observation regarding that note by Rydzewski, made by someone who had taken part in the first crossing of the mountain in 1906.

That the passage of this bad bit of the Largo ridge changed from the *impossibile* (Barbaria's term) to the possible, is due to the fact that during the winter 1903–4 a considerable mass of rock broke loose from this west ridge and fell down onto the Bacone Glacier. In the spring of 1904 I was able to observe this from

Val Bregaglia and better still the following autumn from the summit of the adjacent Bacone. In the year 1910, I got a close view of this change in the Largo ridge and was able to confirm the fact this time, that a largish piece had disappeared from ridge and wall, right up to the aforesaid crack. Thus it had become possible to overcome this point in the ascent. Still it remains a very difficult place and should not be recommended to everyone.

But we must not pause any longer over this western arête of the Largo, as Curtius and his guide are still sitting on the central peak, declaring any further attempt useless!

We descended the way we had come up. From the notch between the central and western Largo peaks we quickly scaled the latter, and after building a small cairn made our way carefully down to the Bacone Glacier. Half an hour later we reached the Bacone saddle. Sils Maria saw us back in time for supper.

After this second Largo expedition, Curtius told me that he now regarded his exploration of the Bacone group as finished, but this did not reflect my own feelings. I am convinced that with the help of a good second comrade we could have attained the highest Largo summit by approaching from the east, past my shirt-collar. In this event my first ascent of June 29th 1891, without my *Herr*, would certainly have been omitted!

The next ambition of Curtius was to climb Monte Disgrazia. We left Maloja at 7 a.m. on August 15th with the intention of reaching the so-called Capanna Maria—the small primitive hut on the western lower summit—that evening. It was agreed, however, that we should undertake the ascent only if the weather were absolutely settled.

In spite of a halt to inspect the site of the future Forno Hut at the west foot of Monte del Forno, we were standing at 1.40 on the summit of Monte Sissone. But the weather did not seem to warrant an ascent of Monte Disgrazia that same afternoon. So it was decided to pass the night in one of the rude chalets of the Pioda Alp, in the upper Valle di Mello, and to carry out the ascent of the Disgrazia early on the 16th, weather permitting.

We climbed down and spent the night in a miserable deserted chalet on the Pioda Alp, and descending next morning to San Martino in mist and showers, we reached Bagni del Masino after an ascent of three-quarters of an hour.

On August 17th we went up to the small new Badile Hut, which had been opened a short time before. In the afternoon, rain set in once more that lasted throughout the night; and a leaky roof did not add to our comfort.

Since the weather improved early on August 18th, we resolved, in spite of a little fresh snow in the higher regions, to traverse the Forcella di Bondo and at the same time to do some reconnoitring about the highest Sciora peak, which had never yet been climbed. From the Forcella di Bondo we were able to get a close view of our mountain, the Sciora di dentro, and decided to cross the highest basin of the Bondasca Glacier so as to attack its south ridge. On arrival at the south ridge itself, we found that to pursue our aim any further would be a very troublesome and dangerous proceeding in consequence of the thick layer of snow upon the rocks. Hence our retreat and descent into Val Bondasca. Our descent over the broken Bondasca Glacier was exceptionally difficult and laborious, and on none of my later crossings did I find it

in such bad condition as in the summer of 1887. The stretch from the Forcella di Bondo to the moraine above Alp Sciora requires 1¼ to 2 hours, according to prevailing conditions. However, on that 18th of August it took us a full four hours. At 5 p.m. we came to the Hotel Bregaglia in Promontogno.

The 20th August 1887 brought the fulfilment of a long-cherished hope of mine—to be allowed to act as guide beyond the borders of my dear Engadine and Bregaglia mountains. For fully thirteen years I had remained faithful to my home mountains, and in retrospect I might well have applied to this long, quiet period the saying of Gottfried Keller: It is sometimes well not to grow up too quickly; hard wood grows slowly, and burns all the longer.

After the necessary preparations for our journey to the Valais, we left Sils, Curtius and I, and marched in high spirits to Chiavenna, bound for Macugnaga by way of Lugano and Val Anzasca.

The heavy rain of the last two days meant considerable snowfall on the heights, so that our plan to reach the Dufourspitze by the east slopes of Monte Rosa and to descend thence to Zermatt appeared rather a risky undertaking. Our apprehensions were markedly increased during an ascent of the Belvedere on the Macugnaga Glacier on the morning of August 22nd, as we could not help noticing that the avalanches on the east wall of Monte Rosa, caused by the melting and sliding of fresh snow, were very frequent. This finally moved us to abandon this dreadful climb, for which I was never able to work up any enthusiasm even in later years. Instead, we turned our attention to the other crossing, namely that of the Jägerhorn. From the slopes north-east of Macugnaga, on the

afternoon of the same day we examined with our glasses the entire high wall of the Jägerhorn which descends eastward to the Macugnaga Glacier, and decided definitely to choose this crossing to the Riffelhaus.

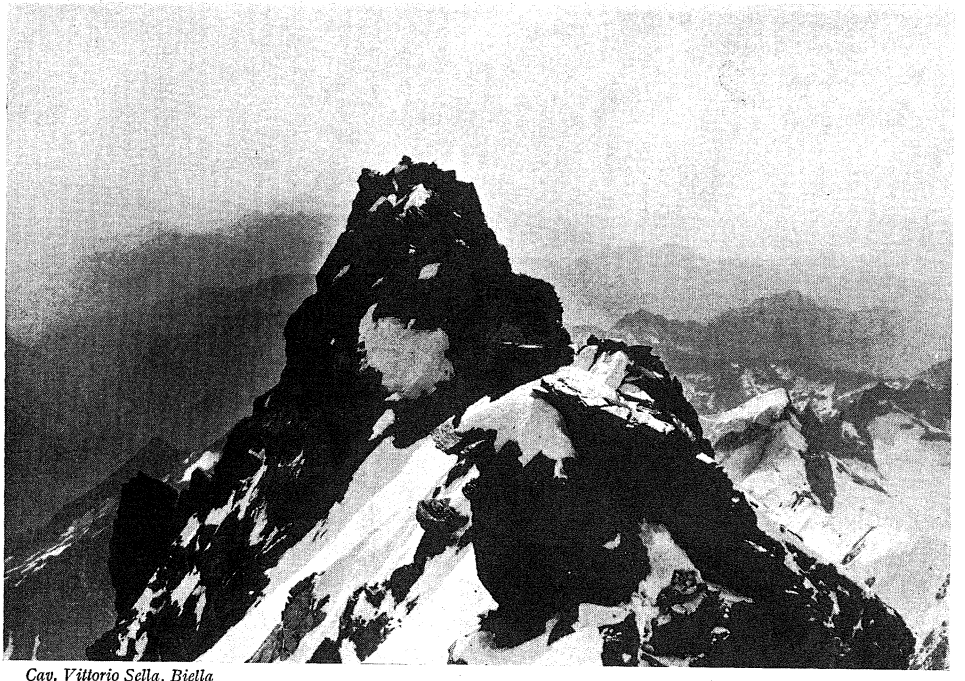
On August 23rd at 2.45 p.m. we actually stood on the peak of the Jägerhorn (13,042 ft.), after an ascent of 12 hours and 55 minutes. The scaling of the high rock wall (about 6,000 ft.) required 8 hours 55 minutes, including halts. No particular difficulties were encountered.

The descent from the Jägerhorn to the Riffelhaus, which began at 4 p.m., was exceedingly laborious and exhausting. Fresh snow lay on the endless snow-fields of the Gorner Glacier, and further down almost as far as Gadmen, with a surface crust of ¾ inch and a depth of full twenty inches. At last at 11.25 p.m. we reached the hospitable Riffelhaus. We had left Macugnaga at 1.50 a.m., and had thus been on our feet for 20 hours and 35 minutes.

It was my first visit to Zermatt.

On August 24th we sauntered leisurely into the town. What I admired more than anything were the gigantic mountains which dominate the St. Niklaus valley—first and foremost the proud and impressive pyramid of the Matterhorn.

And what of Zermatt itself? A throng of climbers —and also of non-climbers! And what a host of guides were swarming in the streets and in front of the hotels! (It happened to be Sunday, and no native of the Valais goes climbing on Sundays until the afternoon.) Among them were the sturdy Alexander Burgener, and Melchior Anderegg, the resourceful, sinewy ice-man from the Bernese Oberland. There, also, was the first conqueror of the Matterhorn from the south,



Cav. Vittorio Sella, Biella

FROM THE SUMMIT OF MONTE ROSA

Below, to left, Val Anzasca ; to right, Colle delle Loccie

Jean Antoine Carrel, and the agile Emile Rey of Courmayeur, and many others. In comparison with this metropolis of mountaineers—oh, how modest seemed my Sils in the Engadine!

As we were planning an ascent of the Matterhorn, and Curtius was in favour of taking a local guide for this purpose, we turned with confidence to Alexander Burgener. He willingly procured a man for us, who later turned out to be very satisfactory. I can be brief about the climb itself, as this familiar ascent of the Matterhorn has been so often described.

On August 26th, we set off by way of the Schwarzsee for the Matterhorn Hut on the Hörnli. We found it in a very dirty and neglected condition. This was not surprising, for not all the guides who frequented it had a sense of order and cleanliness. The following day led us under normal conditions and a clear sky to the summit of the giant Matterhorn (14,781 ft.). I found no great difficulties in the course of this ascent. The difficult place above the shoulder had already at that time been provided with chains and ropes, and thus rendered all too easy.

The evening found us safe in Zermatt, highly pleased with this magnificent tour, and already making plans for our next one—the Zinal Rothorn. Therefore on the evening of the following day we found ourselves in the Trift Hut. This time we were without a local guide, which suited us better and was more pleasant. On August 28th, by paths which were unknown to us, we made our way towards the Zinal Rothorn. The first hour was by dim lantern light. We reached the *Gabel* in the south-west ridge without missing the route; thence crossing the notorious slab on the west side of the ridge, over which a thin, worn-out rope was dangling down, we passed the

airy *Kanzel* and shortly afterwards stood on the highest peak (13,856 ft.) well satisfied with our performance, which to us was equivalent to a first ascent. The descent was uneventful and everything went smoothly.

That evening after supper, I was sitting in front of the Hotel Monte Rosa smoking a Valais cigar with more or less gusto. At that time I had not yet become acquainted with my Toscani brand of so-called coffin-nails. Friend Curtius appeared and announced that on the following day we should have to be moving out of the valley, in order to get to Ried in the Lötschental. From there we were to cross the Petersgrat to Lauterbrunnen and Interlaken, for the purpose of visiting his mother who was staying at the latter place; and if the weather still continued favourable we should climb the Jungfrau together from the Rottal! Although I should have preferred at least one other respectable climb in the Zermatt region, I could of course raise no objection to my companion's plan; perhaps, because it included a mountain with a high-sounding name, and the prospect of visiting another part of the Alps.

On the following evening—it was toward the end of August—after a hot day's journey, partly by carriage and partly by train, though mostly on foot, we arrived at the village of Ried in the Lötschental, and put up at the small Nesthorn Hotel. Here we took a day of well-earned rest; and since a young German pastor, who was staying there, wanted to join up with someone for the purpose of crossing the Petersgrat, it was decided to engage a local guide, at least as far as the pass.

Leaving Ried an hour before dawn on August 30th, we wandered under the leadership of the guide Rubin up a rugged path without lantern light to the so-called

Im Telli. As groping about on the rough footpath was not very pleasant, I remarked that it might not have been amiss if our good Rubin had brought a lantern with him. This elicited from Curtius the laconic reply: "Not necessary. We can follow the scent of the man in front!" Unfortunately he was right, for the odd and unpleasant odour that came from our leader was noticeable at a distance of ten paces and more. Such things are not restricted to Tibet, apparently.

After a fairly easy ascent we reached the level of the Petersgrat (10,500 ft.), under a cloudless sky. The beautiful mountain tops, from the Balmhorn in the west to the Jungfrau in the east, were glowing in the morning sun. And last but not least, the lovely form of the Bietschhorn behind us! A long time we stood in the light and marvelled at all the grandeur.

As our good Rubin showed signs of nervousness on the glacier, we decided to relieve ourselves of his guidance, which was more inconvenient than useful; so we dismissed our Lötschental comrade, and heartily glad he was to return to firm ground and rock.

The three of us went across the Kander and Tschingel snowfields to the so-called Tschingeltritt, and after getting over this stretch of smooth calcareous rock we reached the small inn of the Obersteinberg Alp, where a trim young Alpine maiden presented us with a drink of fresh milk. Under the circumstances we found it intelligible that our pastor changed his plans and declared his preference for stopping at the Obersteinberg Alp!

Curtius and I went on our way alone, descended by Trachsellauenen to Stechelberg and so to Lauterbrunnen, where some guides were standing in front of the Hotel Adler. They stared curiously at us, and

especially at my light suit of Graubünden cloth. When Curtius entered the hotel to order a conveyance to Interlaken, one of them came up to me: "I thought," he remarked maliciously, "that you were the *Herr*, and the other chap the guide!" to which I retorted curtly: "My dear friend, you ought to know that clothes don't always classify a man! What is more, we often both pass ourselves off as *Herren*, and up in the mountains we are sometimes both capable guides!" That was enough, and the inquirer, with his mocking expression, withdrew.

At Interlaken we stopped at the Hotel Jungfraublick, where Curtius' mother was staying. In vain did we wait for Jungfrau weather. The name of our hotel had no effect on the situation; clouded skies day after day, mist, with nasty intermittent showers of rain. Altogether, our Jungfrau shares stood very low.

One day, by way of a change, Curtius proposed a steamer trip to Thun. I agreed with pleasure, as it afforded me the opportunity of looking up a certain dear friend of my army days. But at Thun I realized that I was not independent of my companion. Therefore a *Wiedersehen* before witnesses it must be! Never mind, I had certainly not gone to Thun for courting purposes, and furthermore I was calling upon a twenty-five-year-old married woman, and her husband who was nearly sixty. I met the Anneli of Thun again that day, and her stern spouse also. A joyful greeting it was, but a clouded farewell at the end! I departed conscious that fate all too often plays the matchmaker between people who do not really belong to each other. Later, my dear companion made this Thun interlude and other little frivolities, of which I had been guilty on our joint wanderings, the subject

of a supplementary testimonial, whose contents I am unable to publish at this juncture.

Two days later, I sat once more in the quiet of my modest four walls in the Fextal, and the winter evenings that followed gave me time to ponder over the adventures of the summer. This, my first Valais trip and my first contact with the Bernese Oberland, was of the greatest importance to my future activity in the Alpine world. It marked a definite step forward in my career as guide, which (I repeat once again) I owe to my good comrade, Theodor Curtius.

After the arrival of Curtius in August 1888, the ascent of the Sciora di dentro was planned as the first big climb.

On August 13th I went with his brother, Friedrich Curtius-Brockhoff, and the teacher Caviezel from Sils Maria, to the head of the Forno valley, in order to decide more definitely the site of the Forno Hut.

On my return to Maloja I met Curtius, as arranged. He had latterly been joined by Richard Wiesner, Musical Director from St. Gallen. No objection could be raised to this addition, since on the previous day, during a new and direct ascent of Piz Corvatsch from the west, I had recognized Wiesner as a capable mountaineer. Besides, it seemed safer for three persons to cross the Bondasca Glacier than for only two. After taking leave of my Forno companion, we drove down Val Bregaglia to Promontogno. As we preferred to make this climb direct from the valley, we chose the Hotel Bregaglia for our night's stay, instead of putting up with the primitive sleeping quarters of Alp Sciora.

The first ascent of the Sciora di dentro, which we accomplished safely on the following day, was car-

ried out in eleven hours,[1] including halts. The nett elevation covered in the ascent was approximately 8,000 feet.

During the next few days we were condemned to idleness, as the weather was very unreliable, with thunderstorms, mist, and even snowfall in the higher altitudes; so, by way of a change, Curtius proposed an excursion to the Bernese Oberland.

We left Sils Maria on August 20th, and after a journey full of variety via Chiavenna and Menaggio, reached Lugano in the evening. A rainy day followed, on which we took the Gotthard railway to Flüelen, where we boarded a steamer for Lucerne. I have always remembered this wonderful trip on the Lake of Lucerne on August 21st 1888. Never in my life had I seen such magnificent lighting effects as on that evening on our way from Brunnen to Lucerne. The sun, breaking through the clouds, brought out pictures of enchanting beauty along the shores of the lake. And behind us a view of the Rigi, set in a vivid double rainbow, surpassed every other pleasure of the journey.

As we were not missing anything so long as this doubtful weather continued in the mountains, we decided upon a day of rest in Lucerne. On the 23rd, we took the new Brünig railway to Brienz. A humorous incident occurred during our journey above Lungern. The train stopped suddenly, and the engine strove in vain to get the three attached carriages up to the cog-wheel rod. "All passengers get out and help!" Quick as lightning we had her under way, amid cheers. I think that even without a locomotive we might have been able to get the three little carriages

[1] For the details of this beautiful expedition I refer the reader to Curtius' article in the 24th Year Book of the S.A.C.

up to the pass, as there were stalwart Bernese and Englishmen amongst our numbers!

At Brienz we took the steamer for Interlaken. As we drew in to the Giessbach Falls I heard a familiar female voice calling from the landing-place: "Look, there are two negroes on the boat!" It was Curtius' sister-in-law who was standing with her husband on the pier, and who on recognizing us had deliberately made this remark in a loud voice. It was a jovial meeting, and as negroes we continued our journey to Interlaken. After a little time for rest and refreshment we were taken in a one-horse trap up the Lütschine valley to Grindelwald.

I did not mind making such journeys, as they are instructive and full of variety, but I did find them very tiring, because I could not grasp and absorb all that there was to see; and since I was not very fond of travelling with note-book in hand, I have to suffer for it to-day, as I write these reminiscences. Sometimes my memory leaves me in the lurch, and who knows whether I shall not have to draw upon my imagination to help me over the gaps!

A new and unique mountain world opened up to me at Grindelwald. The tremendous north walls of the Eiger and the Mittellegi, the Mettenberg and the Wetterhörner, which tower aloft, oppressively near, were an endless wonder to my eyes; likewise the broken ice-tongues of the Lower and Upper Grindelwald Glaciers, rolling toward the valley in their narrow, rocky beds. Through the narrow gorge between Mittellegihörnli and Mettenberg the massive Fiescher ridge with the lovely Fieschерwand looks down into the valley, and in the far distance, just to the right of the Mettenberg, peeps out the highest pinnacle of the Finsteraarhorn. But the great peak

that inspired our Grindelwald journey, the Gross Schreckhorn, was out of sight behind the Mettenberg.

On August 24th the weather showed signs of improvement, so we made preparations for our Gross Schreckhorn climb, and in the afternoon went up to the narrow rock passage of the Bäregg with a porter who was to accompany us as far as the Schwarzegg Hut. At that time the way to the hut led across the Lower Grindelwald Glacier over to the Zäsenberg, up the north slopes of the Zäsenberghorn to the so-called Enge and to the upper Eismeer, which one crossed in an easterly direction to the Kastenstein and the hut. Nowadays, however, one leaves the glacier not far beyond the ladder at the Ortfluh, and ascends on the right bank by a marked path, past Rotgufer and up to the Schwarzegg Hut.

It was still daylight when we reached the Schwarzegg Hut; so I took the opportunity of inspecting the first part of our route for the morrow, which must be taken by lantern light. My special object was to investigate at close quarters the Schreckhorn couloir, of ill report. As the only inmates of the hut, we spent a quiet evening, and left at 2.20 a.m. on August 25th, with the presentiment that a hard day's work lay before us, since we could not fail to notice on the previous evening that fresh snow was still lying in the higher altitudes.

By lantern light, cutting steps and keeping as much as possible to the left in the couloir, we climbed safely through, and reached the Schreckfirn at dawn. From here we could easily discern the main line of our further ascent by the steep slope which mounts up to the saddle between Schreckhorn and Lauteraarhorn. We got over the bergschrund without difficulty and made our way with the necessary caution up to the

saddle. Owing to a coating of fresh snow and the loose rock, the final short traverse leftwards to the crest proved to be exceedingly unpleasant.

Although the weather did not look very promising we continued the ascent, crossing the so-called Elliott-Wängli, where the English mountaineer Elliott fell to his death in 1869, and after climbing the ridge which was under heavy snow and partly corniched, reached the summit of the Schreckhorn at 11 a.m.

After a brief halt for refreshment, we began the return journey with all speed and reached the saddle, where the descent down the south-west wall begins, in mist, wind and driving snow. Under such conditions the further descent became difficult in the extreme, but we finally reached the Schreckfirn in safety, and made our way to the Schwarzegg by the so-called Gagg near the Strahlegg, instead of through the dangerous couloir. At 5.35 p.m. we were in the hut.

As we were expected in Grindelwald that evening, we had to give up the idea of staying a second night in the hut and descending the following morning. After a thorough rest we left the hut at 6.30 p.m. During our descent to the Zäsenberg, thick mist and rain set in; we reached the hut, however, by nightfall.

What with darkness, mist and rain, and only the pale light from our pocket lantern, it was no small task from here on to keep the right course to the ladder by the Ortfluh above the lower Eismeer. By fluke or by instinct, we found the wooden ladder at the Bäregg without missing our way, and without halting we trotted down to Grindelwald in torrential rain. At 10.20 p.m., drenched to the skin, we entered the home-like Hotel Adler.

We did not spend much time discussing the events

of the day. I disappeared into my room, divested myself of my wet garments and—without a hot bath—slipped under the cosy eiderdown.

I was not a little surprised when, hardly a quarter of an hour later, the door of my room opened and our landlord himself came in, carrying on a tray a proper supper. Such an attention on the part of an hotel proprietor I had never met with during my career as guide. But that is what happened in the Hotel Adler at Grindelwald, on August 25th 1888.

The next two days did not bring us the desired fair weather for our final climb of the year. It was to be the Wetterhorn, that is, the central Wetterhorn peak, the so-called Mittelhorn, which is fifteen feet higher than the Hasle Jungfrau. As an improvement seemed probable on the 28th, we started off at 3 p.m. and reached the Upper Grindelwald Glacier by the Milchbachloch, and so to the Gleckstein Hut at 6.45 p.m. by the Ziehbachplatten and the ladder. Strange to say, we were the only visitors in the hut that evening, as we had been four days ago in the Schwarzegg.

We left the Gleckstein at 2.45 a.m. on the 29th, and started in the direction of the Krinne Firn and the south-west slopes of the Wetterhorn group. The ascent from the Krinne Firn to the saddle between the front and middle Wetterhorn peaks presented no difficulties worth mentioning, but the glazed rocks that we encountered in some places called for caution. In an easy climb from the saddle, we reached the summit of the Mittelhorn by 8.45, and stayed up there (12,166 ft.) a full hour despite a clouded sky.

During the descent over the snow ridge to the Wettersattel I noticed my companion, who was leading, moving very cautiously, feeling his way downwards with his feet. This drew from me the remark:

"I say, Doctor, you have lost all your usual vigour!" Very soon I found that my reproach was not justified, because the light—a uniform grey—was such that the man in front could not detect the ups and downs of the snow. Our ascending tracks were nowhere to be seen, as the snow was frozen hard. Under such conditions of light, without visible tracks, it is always more unpleasant to walk in front than behind. My companion had certainly lost none of his vigour, for by 12.35 we had entered the Gleckstein Hut, and at 3.40 p.m. were back at the Adler in Grindelwald.

On the following day, I took leave of my kindly and thoughtful comrade and travelled eastward towards the Engadine, where I arrived on August 31st, with a heart full of gratitude towards the man who had given me the opportunity of visiting new scenes.

In 1891, I met Curtius once more, this time not within the borders of my home country, but far away to the east, in the Austrian Dolomites.

It was after my first Dolomite climb—a successful ascent of the Fünffingerspitze by a new route with Norman-Neruda—that I left him in Campitello on September 7th, and wandered alone by Buchenstein and the Falzarego Pass to Cortina d'Ampezzo, where I met my dear Theodor Curtius and his friend Baron von Pechmann.

Since von Pechmann proved to be a weak rock climber, we ascended the beautiful broken tower, Croda da Lago, on September 11th without him, but accompanied by a local guide. It was a fine, stimulating scramble; only the highest bits and those near the summit pinnacle required some caution because of the heaps of fine débris fallen a few days before, when a point of the peak had been struck by lightning.

After a day of loafing, we left Cortina on September

13th. Our goal was the Fedaia Pass at the north foot of the Marmolata, and our route lay over the Falzarego Pass, Buchenstein and the Padon Pass. We spent the night at the pass, in the small and exceedingly dirty inn. It had not only untidy rooms, but a drunken proprietor. And when my two *Herren* wanted to sleep, one of them had first to remove from his bed a dead chicken which had evidently discovered a soft resting-place in its last hour.

Glad to turn our backs upon these uncongenial quarters, we resumed our tour under a cloudless sky early on the 14th. We went up to the little Marmolata Glacier, and after four hours' comfortable climb we reached the highest point in the Dolomites, the summit of the Marmolata (10,965 ft.), at 9 a.m. From this central and commanding height we enjoyed a magnificent view.

Avoiding our last night's hostelry, we descended westwards and out through Val di Fassa to Campitello, where we put up at the Albergo al Molino.

On the 15th, in fair weather, we set forth on a pleasant *Wanderung* over the Forcella di Rodella and Sellajoch, past the east foot of the beautiful Langkofel group, into the Grödner Valley, and out to St. Ulrich, whence a two-horse conveyance brought us to Waidbruck on the Brenner railway. After a short train journey we arrived at Bozen the same evening.

September the 16th was idled away in Bozen, nor did we undertake much more on the 17th, but travelled further in a leisurely *diligence*, reaching Meran in the evening. The 18th brought us to Trafoi, and from there we went with a porter up to the Payer Hut, in order to attack the Ortler on the following day.

As the *Wirtschaft* of the Payer Hut had closed down on the 15th, we found the place empty. On entering,

we failed to notice in the twilight that doors, windows and benches had received a fresh coat of brown paint, and nowhere had any warning been posted. What happened? The unsuspecting visitor from Fex, who was again wearing a light grey suit of Graubünden cloth, seated himself at once on the bench by the table, and the consequence was a broad, brown stripe across the seat of his beautiful breeches. And as the colour proved to be fadeless, it furnished a target for jeers for some time to come.

The same evening Professor Sartorius from Waltershausen and Professor Pott arrived with two guides from Trafoi. The first-named, whom I was privileged to accompany on several occasions in 1889, was a cultured scholar, a pleasant man and an excellent mountaineer. In the company of these gentlemen we spent an agreeable and instructive evening in the Payer Hut without missing the absent landlord in the least.

Early on September 20th ("Day of Prayer" in Switzerland), the weather did not look at all promising. Nevertheless about 6 a.m. we decided to risk the ascent of the Ortler, reaching the summit at 9 a.m. Storm and driving snow compelled us to return immediately, and at 10.35 we were back in the Payer Hut. We did not descend to Trafoi, but to Sulden.

We had intended to make another attractive climb from Sulden, but as the unkind weather drew a heavy line through our plans we decided to return home by crossing the Stelvio to Bormio. My companions had to choose this pass, for owing to the closing of postal traffic over the Stelvio, they had registered their luggage in Prad on September 18th by some unknown route for Sondrio.

Starting from Franzenshöhe, we crossed this high

Alpine pass on September 23rd in deep fresh snow, wind and snow flurries, and were tired out by the time we reached Bormio in the evening. The 24th brought us by a pleasant carriage drive to the provincial town of Sondrio, where we stayed at the Hotel Posta, kept by Vitale. My two companions were now looking forward to regaining their luggage. Inquiries at the hotel, however, revealed that nothing had been received except an umbrella on which 75 Rappen duty would have to be paid. Everything else was missing, nor was there any advice from the Customs House. The doubts I had expressed at Prad about the somewhat casual acceptance and dispatch of the luggage had been well-founded. Obviously, the missing things had been treated as transit freight at the Italian frontier, and had been directed to the town Customs House nearest to Sondrio.

The fatal broad stripe across the seat of my trousers had lost its attraction that evening, in the Hotel Posta at Sondrio, as the missing luggage had become the main topic of conversation. It was now my turn to laugh! On September 25th I left my worthy travelling companions still busy with the search for their luggage and returned to my Fextal. Thus ended our delightful and varied trip through Tyrol to the Valtelline.

In September 1892 I saw Curtius once more, but only for a short time. Coming from Zermatt, I met him at Interlaken on September 3rd. The ascent of the Jungfrau from the Rottal was again our aim, and to this end we had asked the Meiringen guide, Kaspar Maurer, to join us here. Evidently we had once again fallen into the bad graces of the clerk of the weather, for a steady downpour had set in; and when on the morning of September 6th we discovered that

fresh snow had fallen low down in the mountains and that there were no signs of improvement, we turned our backs upon the ungracious Jungfrau.

Maurer was paid off, Curtius went on to Italy for a few days, and I returned home. Before our parting in Interlaken we had arranged to meet in the Bregaglia as soon as the weather should clear up, and on September 12th we were sitting together in the Hotel Bregaglia at Promontogno. Although the fresh snow had not yet entirely disappeared from the mountains, we decided to visit the Forno region for a few days.

On the 13th we started on foot for Sils Maria. There we provided ourselves with a supply of food ample for six days, and set out for the Forno Hut on the 14th with two porters to help us. On the 15th the two of us climbed alone up the south-eastern lower summit of Cima del Largo to take photographs, but we still encountered a great deal of fresh snow on the heights.

On the 16th we practised the art of cooking, in which my companion showed himself the better man. Only the omelettes refused to turn out right, so we agreed to stick to the simpler menus.

On the 17th we climbed Monte del Forno under fair skies, and basked in the warm sunshine at the top for several hours. The descent took from 12.05 to 12.55—evidence that we had not altogether lost our form. On the 18th of September we had intended to tackle Cima di Castello, but gave it up finally owing to the quantity of fresh snow, and returned to Sils in the afternoon. However, two days later my good comrade and I were on that superb view-point, Piz Julier, where we sat from 9 until 11 a.m. admiring the glorious scene in warm sunshine.

Theodor Curtius left me on the 22nd for the north, to meet with a long and serious illness.

A full ten years elapsed before I again met my old friend in the mountains. My engagements with other mountaineers generally kept me away from the Engadine until the end of September, and when I returned to my Fextal, I would find that he had already been gone for some time. Furthermore, during the whole summer of 1901 I was more or less active in the North American mountain range of British Columbia.

Thus it was not until September 1903 that we made a journey together via the Lunghin and Forcellina passes to Avers, and from there by way of Bregalga and the Duan Pass to Soglio and Promontogno.

In 1906, on the occasion of a Forno Hut inspection, we ascended Monte del Forno and several days later visited the new Sciora Hut in Val Bondasca. With this we combined the crossing of the Cengalo Glacier and the Viale to Sass Fura.

The Forno Hut, built in 1889, was really the work of our dear Curtius, as he generously shouldered most of the expense of building. This refuge for mountaineers by the Forno Glacier was very close to his heart, and every autumn before his departure from Sils Maria we paid it a visit. Being a private hut, it was not a very profitable undertaking for him, and he was often obliged to make up a deficit in the running expenses.

In the year 1912, a plan matured in his mind for enlarging the hut and carrying out some thoroughgoing improvements, with the idea of presenting it to our S.A.C. as a gift. I had a rough estimate made a year later, which set the cost at about 10,000 francs. Nevertheless it would have been carried through, had

not the disastrous world-war shattered his philanthropic plan. His inability to undertake the rebuilding of the hut at his own expense was a sad disappointment to this noble and generous spirit. The name of Theodor Curtius will always occupy a place of honour in the history of the Forno Hut.

I cannot refrain from quoting here the words which Curtius, who was devoted heart and soul to our beautiful Alpine world, entered in my *Führerbuch*.[1]

" In August 1919, for the first time after a five years' interval while the world was at war, I revisited my beloved Sils and my chalet for a few weeks ; and now, in the autumn of 1920, I am once more taking leave of these peaceful fields after four weeks brimful of pleasure. At the same time I have to part with my dear old friend Klucker again, which is always hard. Not that I can follow him any longer over mountain and valley in the glorious Bregaglia, where he finds eternal youth. My motto is : Once great in deed, now wise and cautious. All the same, last autumn Klucker led me once more from Sils to the Julier road over the Polaschin Pass, which we first opened up to the mountaineering world in 1883 ; and yesterday up to the Forno Hut, which was taken over on that day by the Rorschach Section of the S.A.C. How many beautiful memories of glorious mountain days, of good and true men were there revived! My heartfelt thanks to you, dear, faithful friend Klucker, for all the happiness that you have once more given me on this visit."

SILS-ENGADINE, *September 18th* 1920.

In the years 1907 and 1908 Theodor Curtius enlarged " Mulin vegl," the chalet in Sils Maria which had become his property. In 1908, when he took possession of his new home, he dedicated to me these moving lines :

[1] Note-book in which employers write records and testimonials for the guide.

Freundestreue im Hochgebirge

Ein Schrei, ein Sturz, und es riss das Seil.
Sie flogen hinunter so steil, so steil—
Ein Poltern, Rauschen, Rieseln—Stille—
Ringsum der Unendlichkeit tötender Wille.

Doch unten tief auf dem Firneneis,
Da klirrt es, stöhnt es, da regt es sich leis—
Er schleppt sich zum Freunde, im Herzen den Tod,
Und schreibt in den Schnee mit Blut so rot:
Hier liegt er, wo ich liege.

* * * * *

Friendship in the High Alps

A cry, a lurch, and a breaking rope!
The downward rush, the plunge, and then—
A trail of stones that dies again
In deathly stillness. O'er the slope
Reigns silent Destiny.

Yet far below on the glacier bed
One stirs, draws nearer to his friend,
And on the snow, ere comes the end,
He writes the words in blood so red:
HERE LIES HE—WHERE I LIE.

Dedicated to his dear faithful friend Christian Klucker on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first ascent of Piz Bacone, by

THEODOR CURTIUS.

SILS-ENGADINE, *August 27th* 1908.

CHAPTER V

CLIMBS ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY

WITH LUDWIG NORMAN-NERUDA, 1889–1891

I

ACCOUNTS of the expeditions which my mountaineer friend Norman-Neruda undertook in my company have already been published, partly by himself, and after his all too early death, by his wife May Norman-Neruda. Nevertheless I am taking the liberty of reverting to these expeditions, one reason being that his version does not always and at all points coincide with my own notes.

I made the acquaintance of this good climbing companion on August 14th 1889, in Maloja, whither he had come in the company of Dr. Bela Tauscher and his wife. An arrangement was made with the Tauschers, whereby I was to be at the disposal of the young Norman-Neruda, since for the few climbs they were contemplating they had engaged the services of two Tyrolese guides, Alois Pinggera and Joseph Reinstadler.

Ludwig Norman-Neruda, at that time about twenty-six, was of Swedish descent, but had become naturalized in England. He was tall, but his build did not suggest anything remarkable in the way of physical powers. Endowed with a kind heart and a character of pure gold, he possessed an iron strength of will coupled with serenity. It is sad that nine years later,

the Dolomites which he so loved and admired, were destined to be his doom!

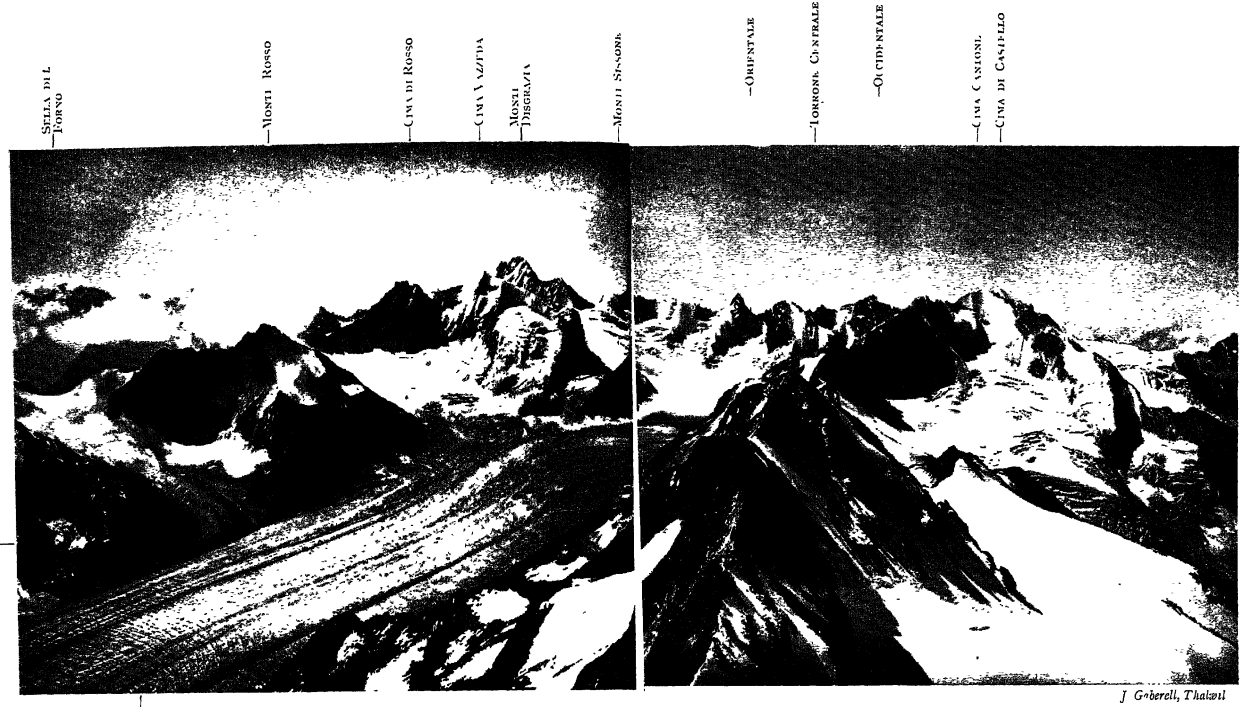
My first expedition with him was discussed and arranged on the very night of our meeting in Maloja. Its objective was Piz Lagrev (10,393 ft.), direct from the south, by the great couloir facing the hamlet of Gravasalvas.

At 5 a.m. on August 15th, we two left Maloja and wandered by way of Gravasalvas towards the Lagrev and its couloir. I soon noticed that while we were walking on paths and grassy slopes my companion, with legs some eight inches longer than mine, had the advantage, but on scree slopes the order was reversed.

Shortly after 7 a.m. we entered the couloir. The higher we advanced, the better we could see that a direct ascent to the southern peak was out of the question. We were forced out of the couloir to the right, and then in order to get up any higher, had to scale a stretch of loose, crumbling rock, which led us up to a sheer wall about twenty feet high. We surmounted this at a possible spot by careful, very difficult climbing, shortly afterwards reaching the east ridge of the lower summit, and a few minutes later the peak itself. The time was 8.50 a.m.

We both agreed that our ascent had been very dangerous and was in nowise to be commended to any would-be successors. "I hope that's not our way down," remarked my companion with reluctance; "I wouldn't go down there for a thousand francs."

Although the weather had taken a turn for the worse and a light snowfall had set in, we resolved to climb the highest peak of the Lagrev which rose up before us to the north. In half an hour we had reached the peak. The descent was accomplished by



THE FORNO GLACIER FROM PIZ BACONE

In foreground, Piz Casnile

J. Gaberell, Thalwil

FROM PIZ BACONE

In foreground, Piz Casnile

a more favourable route, and we were back at Maloja punctually at midday.

After lunch we prepared for the Forno expedition, which had been planned as a joint undertaking with the Tauschers, and on the same evening at 6.40 we found ourselves, six strong, in the newly-built Forno Hut as its first guests.

A joint attack on Monte del Forno (10,544 ft.) was to be carried out on August 16th. As the ascent did not require more than two hours, we left the hut as late as 6 a.m. After a pleasant rest on the summit we left this splendid view-point at 10.30 and were back at the hut by 1.11 p.m.

During this Monte del Forno ascent Norman-Neruda and I agreed that after the midday meal we should attempt the still untrodden north-east ridge of Monte Rosso.

Somewhat late—it was past three in the afternoon—we started in the direction of the Sella del Forno, but turned to the right before reaching it and mounted the steep snow slope to the north-east ridge. And then there followed a stimulating, and at times rather exposed clamber. There were two places that put us on our mettle and were by no means simple to get over. At 6.25 p.m. we stood on the peak of Monte Rosso (10,132 ft.). We descended by the ordinary way and reached the Forno Hut at night.

While crossing the snow-free Rosso Glacier, hardly ten minutes away from the hut, an incident occurred which I ought to mention. I was preceding my companion by about a dozen paces, when I suddenly heard a shout behind me. On turning back I saw that he had mysteriously disappeared. In a few bounds I was at the spot where the voice had come from. And what did I see? My companion, who had fallen into

a glacier hole ten feet deep, smiling and calmly chewing a crust of bread! In one jump he was out of it and received straightway a well-deserved reprimand from his guide.

For August 17th we had been planning the ascent of Piz Torrone Orientale (10,915 ft.). Since our party of six would need ample time for the ascent as well as for the descent, I suggested that we start at 4 a.m. at the latest, but this did not suit everyone, and we did not get away from the hut until 5 a.m. Under a clear sky and with excellent snow-conditions we walked towards our mountain. The snow slope at the head of the Forno Glacier which gives access to the rocky east wall of the Torrone Orientale, involved a good deal of labour on account of crevasses and hard snow. Nevertheless, and in spite of our somewhat too large numbers, we reached the peak at 10.30. Unfortunately, however, we were soon enveloped in a dense mist which hid the view almost entirely. This ascent was the third ever made, and Frau Tauscher had the distinction of being the first woman to make it.

In the course of this expedition I noticed that my Tyrolese colleague Joseph Reinstadler was very efficient on ice and snow, but that his performance on rocks lagged far behind that of his comrade Alois Pinggera.

We left the summit at 11.40 and entered the hut again towards 4 p.m.

These four climbs of August 1889 were to Norman-Neruda and myself the prelude to further expeditions together.

* * * * *

I was not a little surprised when in the month of December following, a letter came from Norman-

Neruda from London, asking me if I should be prepared to accompany him about New Year's time from Macugnaga to Zermatt over some mountain. Although I was under the impression that my young companion went in for mountaineering purely as a matter of sport, I agreed, subject to some necessary reservations. And thus we met on the evening of December 27th 1889, in Luino, on Lake Maggiore, took the train to Laveno and crossed over to Pallanza by steamer.

A cloudy day followed, with a chilly and tedious drive to Ceppomorelli in Val Anzasca. On the 29th, through eighteen inches of snow, we arrived at our destination, Macugnaga via Pestarenna, where we put up at Franz Lochmatter's Hotel Monte Rosa.

On the same evening my young companion unfolded his plan, which was to this effect: "If the weather is good to-morrow, we might climb up to the hut on the Jägerrücken, and on New Year's Eve push on from there over the Dufourspitze to Zermatt!" This revelation was not particularly welcome, as it showed a want of reflection and a total disregard of existing conditions. With fresh snow two feet deep in the valley, I firmly declined to co-operate in such a venture, good weather or no, intimating that it was very doubtful whether we should be able to reach Zermatt even over an easier mountain or pass.

The next morning my companion realized that his plan was done for. It was snowing heavily, and by the same evening the snow was lying at least three feet deep in Macugnaga. I often recall that 30th of December. From breakfast till supper time we were confined to the inn. Old Lochmatter regaled us with hunting tales and anecdotes, and

showed that he had thoroughly mastered this sort of "Latin." [1]

On New Year's Eve we left the valley somewhat crestfallen and were glad indeed to find that miners had cleared the path down to Pestarenna, and from there to Ceppomorelli. That evening we sat in the Hotel Garoni in Pallanza where we saw the old year out more pleasantly, without doubt, than we should have done somewhere up by the Dufourspitze. On January 1st 1890, we drove to Lugano, where we parted, each going his homeward way alone.

II

On June 30th 1890, my young friend Norman-Neruda arrived at my house on his way back from the Dolomites. The plan which we worked out on the rainy 1st of July included the following items:

1. A training climb up Piz Fora from the Fex Glacier, direct by the east face.
2. Piz Tremoggia by the south-west ridge.
3. Attempt at a better route up Monte di Scerscen from the upper Tschierva Glacier.
4. Ascent of Piz Roseg, possibly by the north face.
5. Ascent of Piz Bernina starting from Boval, by the north-east face, via the Berninascharte.

Our training climb on July 2nd up Piz Fora (11,063 ft.), we took pretty easy, for we did not start from Sils Maria until 8.25 a.m. Beneath a cloudless sky we made our way up the Fextal to the Fex Glacier. Ascending its upper portion, we bore off to the right and to the eastward of point 2,923, direct over the

[1] Translator's Note: "hunters' Latin" (Jägerlatein) = "drawing a long bow."

east face of the mountain to the summit, which we reached at 2 p.m.[1]

For August 4th our programme was the south-west ridge of the Tremoggia, a climb which I had carried out alone—ascent and descent—at the request of the cartographer J. M. Ziegler on October 28th 1879, and which had not been repeated since.

None too early—about 5.45 a.m.—we left Sils Maria and started up the Fextal. In following the route to the Tremoggia Pass, a steep clamber brought us to the east side of the Fex Glacier (known in Sils as the "Vadret del Tremoggia"). Half an hour before reaching the pass we halted to deliberate whether instead of taking the jagged south-west ridge we shouldn't choose the north-west face—a new route, and we soon agreed upon the latter.

Leaving the pass route to the left, we climbed in an easterly direction toward the bergschrund at the foot of the wall and crossed it without difficulty. The further ascent up the first half of the wall was negotiated by a poorly marked but exceedingly steep rock gully, the continuation of which was a steep snow ridge leading up to the neighbourhood of the south peak. The ascent of the rock gully was a hard job and required careful attention for our safety, for the rocks were smooth and in places glazed. We made

[1] Norman-Neruda's statement contained in the notices of the D. & Ö.A.V., October number, 1890, that Piz Fora had hitherto been reached only from the Fedoz valley, is incorrect. It is quite true that in 1875 the first climber, Dr. Emil Burckhardt, with Cadonan, reached the peak from Fedoz, from the direction of Monte Muretto. As early as 1876 Piz Fora was reached by natives of Sils upon the route of Burckhardt's descent, and most of the ascents before ours led along the east slopes of Piz Led and Piz Güz up to the north-west ridge, which was then followed along its whole length, right to the summit.

short work of the snow ridge that followed, and at 11.55 we stood on top of the southern peak.

After an hour's rest we descended by the superb and thrilling south-west ridge, and within 1½ hours had regained the Fex Glacier to the north-east of the Tremoggia Pass, whence we returned to the Fextal over familiar ground.

This ascent by the north-west face of the Tremoggia has not been repeated, nor has the new ascent which I made on June 9th 1898 with the Russian v. Rydzewski, which leads up the face about 350 feet further to the north-east, and so to the north peak. Of course, Piz Tremoggia is not close to any great tourist centre like Pontresina, Grindelwald or Zermatt, and besides, this mountain can only boast a height of 11,325 feet above sea-level.

On July 7th we went over to the Roseg valley, to Caduff's. As my companion was not feeling well I employed the 8th of July for determining by telescope, from the highest pastures of Alp Ota, the main lines of our attack on Monte di Scerscen (13,015 ft.).

Before dealing with our Scerscen climb I should like to refer briefly to the history of its conquest.

Leonz Held, later chief of the Swiss Federal Topographical Bureau, and his assistant, Arpagaus, are known to have reached, on September 17th 1875, the north-east peak of the Scerscen—a point about 180 feet lower than the highest peak and scarcely 100 yards away from it. Owing to the advanced hour and to the serious indisposition of his assistant, this hardy topographer felt obliged to turn back. Late the following autumn I heard from Arpagaus, who was also a guide, about this Scerscen climb of the topographer Held. Since the latter had been my captain in the military service, and as I was interested in

Monte di Scerscen, I entered into correspondence with him during the winter of 1875–1876. He advised me soon afterwards that his duties did not permit of his making another attempt upon the mountain, but that if I were seriously considering an ascent, I had better make it from the south side, from the Upper Scerscen Glacier. He was firmly convinced that the rocks could be climbed from that side.

I had discussed with a strapping young comrade the question of a possible attempt, and had had to conclude that an ascent from the south would be impracticable without a bivouac at the foot of the rocks, as there were no club-huts at that time, either in the Mortèl or by the Upper Scerscen Glacier. In the spring of 1876, my comrade left the Upper Engadine, and after that Monte di Scerscen remained unassailed, so far as I was concerned. If I had then had a companion at hand of the Norman-Neruda type, I hardly think that on September 13th 1877, Dr. Paul Güssfeldt, Hans Grass and Caspar Capat would have or could have attacked a virgin Scerscen.[1]

It was rather a puzzle to me during the next years, why Güssfeldt had chosen the less advantageous route over the ice-nose, when hardly 700 feet away on the right rises the wall of the Schneehaube, which if not actually inviting, does appear less formidable and also leads more comfortably to the small glacier plateau north-west of the highest point. Every time I came face to face with the Tschierva side of Monte di Scerscen I busied myself with this Schneehaube wall.

And so it came about that Norman-Neruda and I formulated the plan to attempt the Scerscen by this new route in July 1890.

[1] Cf. Paul Güssfeldt, "Erste Ersteigung des Monte Rosso di Scerscen," S.A.C. Year Book, 13, pp. 285–312.

At 2.25 a.m. on July 9th we left the Roseg Restaurant and went up by Alp Misaun to the Tschierva Glacier which we crossed at a point slightly higher than the position of the present Tschierva Hut.

Climbing to the right of Piz Humor we attained by 7 a.m. the upper western snow basin of the Tschierva Glacier at the foot of the Schneehaube wall of Monte di Scerscen. An hour and a half of step cutting in hard, but good snow brought us close to the Schneehaube rock wall which rises from right to left in an easterly direction to the highest snow terrace, and at the top where it runs out, and touches this terrace on the left, is crowned by a small ice-cliff. By vigorous use of our ice-axes it was reached by 10.30—three and a half hours from the bergschrund below. Working quickly, we crossed a little below it in the ice-avalanche track towards the right, and slightly ascending reached the flat upper end of a huge, curiously formed ice-block. After a brief halt we climbed higher, reaching the aforementioned snow terrace a few minutes later. Mounting further in an easterly direction, we crossed two bergschrunds, one after another, directly below the highest peak; and climbing straight upwards from here, partly over glazed rocks, we reached the summit of Monte di Scerscen at 1.04.

The descent, begun at 1.38, led us down to the valley by the same route. At 7.25 we were safely back at our headquarters in the Roseg valley.

In his publications Norman-Neruda recommended the route of our Scerscen ascent. A few years later I could not have recommended our route any more than that of Dr. Güssfeldt over the glacier nose in 1877, because it seems to happen fairly often that both routes are impracticable for several years at a

time. This is true of the Klucker-Norman-Neruda route owing to the movement of the ice and the formation of schrunds at the lower edge of the high snow terrace, which more often than not prevent a crossing from the upper end of the Schneehaube wall to the parts just below the summit. In 1894 as well as in 1899 I had to turn back at this point owing to the presence of a schrund that could not be circumvented. In regard to the Güssfeldt route, it happens frequently that the mass of ice at the glacier nose in moving forward breaks off vertically, so that even the most expert ice-man does not attack this place.

III

The impressions which I had taken in from the top of Piz Tschierva in July 1872 of the glacier world at the head of the Tschierva basin had remained vividly stamped upon my mind, though eighteen years had since passed away. Especially deep was my feeling for the proud structure of beautiful Piz Roseg from the north. And so it came about on July 1st in Fex that my first thought was for an ascent of Piz Roseg by its north face. It was really hardly necessary, "in order to examine the apparent possibility of ascending Piz Roseg from the north," as my companion represented the matter later on, to scale first the Schneehaube wall of the Scerscen. As a matter of fact, the new route in its main outlines had been fixed in my mind for several years, and but for the lack of someone with a real aptitude and liking for such things, this ascent would certainly have been carried out before 1890.

On July 10th we took a stroll over to Pontresina, and I had the opportunity for a "gentle exchange of words" with some of my colleagues there! In

the evening we were back at Caduff's in the Roseg valley.

The 11th of July was chosen for our ascent up the north face of Piz Roseg. In doubtful weather we left our headquarters at 1 a.m. and took the same route as two days before to the upper Tschierva Glacier plateau at the north foot of our mountain. Storm and driving snow drove us back into the valley. Then followed three days of rain and heavy snowfall, extending right down to the Upper Engadine valley. On July 15th we made our way along the Tschierva Glacier until we were close to the Vadretin da Tschierva. We wanted to make sure of the condition of the Roseg face with our glasses. As a result of our investigation we decided to attack the north face of the Roseg early on July 16th.

At 6.15 the next morning, under a cloudless sky, we stood by the bergschrund at the foot of the Roseg north wall. Our route led up from this, in a line directly below the snow-cap of the Roseg, to a rock-band on the wall which ran across the ice slope of the mountain about 350 feet above the bergschrund. On account of an ice coating, this band of rock gave us a good deal of trouble, though it is not high. Above it we made our way to the left, slightly ascending, till we came to a deep ice-gully about thirty-five feet wide. This absolutely had to be crossed in order to get to the upper portion of the large snow and ice slopes of the north wall on the far side, and thence, in a direct but steep ascent, to reach the highest peak.

The crossing of this ice-filled gully or ravine, which plunges down at an angle of exactly 60° (measured), called for some hard step-cutting work. Each separate step had to be made big enough to allow easy room for both feet, and in addition hand-holds were

cut in the ice. Whether every single step required about seventy strokes with the pick, as my companion states in his notes, I cannot remember! When one is bent on a job like this one has no time to count strokes. The further observation that crampons would have saved us much work and time at this spot seems odd, because on smooth slopes at such an angle even the most skilful and experienced crampon artist will have to resort to the ice-axe. The crossing of this ice-gully was without doubt the most difficult part of the whole climb.

From the upper edge of the snow slope, where we halted for half an hour, we climbed upwards, cutting steps all the while, in the direction of the highest Roseg peak. The higher we advanced the steeper became the slope. The layer of snow grew thinner and thinner, and about 350 feet below the peak disappeared entirely. To avoid long, weary step-cutting, we gave up the direct ascent to the peak and crossed over to the right towards the summit ridge, which we reached at the last gap above the saddle between both peaks, at 12.37. After a halt of twenty-five minutes we clambered up the last stretch to the highest peak, on which we set foot at 1.20.[1] For obvious reasons we descended by the usual route, but with this difference, that from the small hanging glacier on the west wall we turned to the right and climbed down by an avalanche track and avalanche snow to the Sella Glacier, thus shortening our way.

Left peak 2.30, arrived snow-summit at 3.08. Rest 15 minutes there. Arrived Mortèl Hut 5.45. Rest at same, ½ hour. Arrived at Roseg Restaurant 7.25 p.m.

[1] Norman-Neruda's note that we had climbed up by way of the saddle is incorrect, likewise that we reached the summit only at 2.14.

Thus my dream of 1872 was fulfilled on July 16th, and my dear comrade Norman-Neruda, who could show some enthusiasm even for difficult ice- and snow-problems, was so much elated about this new Roseg ascent that that evening in the Roseg valley he made me a present of his clinometer.

* * * * *

When we took leave of the guests at the Roseg inn on July 17th, it did not occur to us that our Bernina climb, planned for July 18th, would end up in the Roseg valley again instead of at Boval. We went to Pontresina, and reached the old Boval Hut at 8 p.m., our object being to open up a new route to Piz Bernina (13,304 ft.) on the following day. Although I could not see any practical value in this, I refrained from saying so to my companion, since the proposal had come from him and I did not wish to hurt his feelings.

In those days things were quieter up in Boval. Except for numerous darting mice we two were the only inhabitants of the hut that evening.

Before sketching our heroic exploit of July 18th, I consider it essential to rectify my companion's description of this climb in several particulars.

Norman-Neruda knew the environment of the Morteratsch Glacier only from the map and from Alpine literature. When in his writings he presents it as my opinion that the long snow corridor, leading up to the west of the Labyrinth by the rocks, was the route of Dr. Ludwig in October 1879, he bases this on a misunderstanding. Since I had in the early 'eighties spoken not only with Dr. Ludwig, but also with Hans Grass about their ascent of the Bernina, I knew perfectly well where the lower part of their ascent had taken place, starting from the Morteratsch

Glacier. The ascent of Dr. Ludwig and Grass was made to the west of Point 2,749, while ours was to the east of it. Ludwig's entry into the so-called "Gurgel" took place at a level of about 9,650 feet, as against ours at 8,950 feet. Our snow gorge is a good 1,300 feet high and is nowhere threatened by falling ice throughout its length. On the other hand, the "Gurgel" of Ludwig-Grass (which by the way has a length of 650 feet) led up all the way amidst débris from the glaciers above. I had already made it clear to my companion on the evening of July 17th in the hut that I would under no circumstances attempt the "Gurgel" of Dr. Ludwig. Therefore we chose to make our start through the long gorge described above.

Regarding our ascent through the gorge, which lasted about three hours, my companion writes the following words: "We had, however, been in an almost continuous hail of stones and fragments of ice for 3 hours and 8 minutes." I do not understand how Norman-Neruda came to make such a statement. On the lower level, before we entered the snow gorge, I had called his attention to the fact that this couloir showed no evidence of danger from stones, since there were none lying about which had fallen from above. Three or four times during our ascent there was a fall of ice fragments which came from the rocky rim of the couloir on our right. This was easily explained, because ice had formed on the rocks during the night; and since by sunrise we had put hardly a third of the couloir behind us, we had this bother thrown in. If we had started from the hut at 2 a.m., as I had proposed the evening before, instead of as late as 3.15, we could have conquered the whole gorge before the sun overtook us. Rising and starting early were, however, not always our strong point.

After hard step-cutting work we stood at 7.10 at the upper end of the snow gorge, and after a short halt we turned to the right, mounting over rocks in an easy climb up to Point 3,208 on the map, just where the snow slope begins that leads up in a south-westerly direction to the lower end of the Bernina east ridge. This point Norman-Neruda and others mistakenly call " Sass del repos " (rock of rest). The " Sass del repos " lies south-eastward from here and lower down—about by the " e " of the word " repos." Bernina climbers, who use the Labyrinth for their ascent, reach this halting-place shortly after leaving the Labyrinth.

We set forth on the further ascent at 9 a.m., after an ample rest. It led us in a south-westerly direction in a gentle curve to the bergschrund below the north-east wall of Piz Bernina and the Scharte, which we reached about where the " P " of the name " P. Bernina " stands. It was already past ten o'clock, and the steep snow wall rising from the bergschrund did not inspire us with great confidence. And from where we stood it was hard to tell whether the rocks which crowned the ice slope were scaleable or not. My comrade's idea of ascending direct to the Bernina-scharte had to be dropped at the outset, because a huge snow corniche occupied it, stretching out many feet above our wall. What made us somewhat uneasy was the threatening change in the weather. Still, we stubbornly continued the ascent and went on undismayed with our task, which consisted first of all in getting across the difficult bergschrund. This we finally succeeded in doing. What followed from here upwards was hard, heavy labour. The thin snow on the ice-wall was soft and unstable. So I had to remove the snow at every step to make a good, safe

foothold. After long and toilsome work we arrived at the rocks and found them anything but easy to climb. The fresh snow of July 12th and 13th had not entirely disappeared, and our climbing was much hindered by the underlying ice. And to make matters worse, the weather was changing rapidly. We worked in feverish haste. Leaving the awkward rocks to the left below the Berninascharte and crossing further to the right, we mounted upwards and finally reached the foot of the so-called " Schartenkopf " (to the right of the corniche). The hour was 2.20 p.m.

A powerful south-west wind drove the mist from the Tschierva side across our ridge; and from the direction of Maloja and the Julier we already heard thunder. It was my first acquaintance with the Berninascharte, but its welcome to the stranger was far from friendly. It was clear, of course, that under such weather conditions the ascent from the Scharte to Piz Bernina must be given up, and this was decided without discussion. Rapidly we clambered up to the Schartenkopf, noting by the way that this terrible drop near the Scharte had nothing so very terrible about it after all.[1]

Without a pause we traversed the ridge northward towards Pizzo Bianco, but seeing in advance that the Bianco could offer us no shelter from the thunderstorm, we sought and found, about ten or fifteen feet below the crest of the ridge on the Morteratsch side —therefore out of the wind—a tiny place where we could anchor ourselves. But it was high time, for our axes were humming ominously, which moved me to unrope myself and carry them across to Pizzo

[1] Klucker refers to the exaggerated account of Paul Güssfeldt, " Die Ueberwindung der Berninascharte," S.A.C. Year Book, 1879.

Bianco and to ram them deep into the summit corniche. It was probably about three o'clock in the afternoon by the time we sat side by side again in the little niche, tied fast to the rock with the rope. The thunderstorm had begun in all its fury. And the next three hours were without a doubt the most disagreeable I have ever experienced.

The concert that was given, up near the 13,000-feet level between Pizzo Bianco and the Berninascharte, was a gruesome one! The wild battle of storm, hail and snow, the glaring flashes of lightning, and the mighty thunderclaps, threatened to confound our senses. Uncanny was the play of the lightning just a few feet above our heads, and there was no end to the howling and hissing on the Bianco ridge. In silence we cowered against the rock directly above the precipice, overwhelmed by hail and snow. There was a roaring vibration round my hat all the while, such as a strong wind makes passing through a feather, and sparks were sometimes hanging from its brim, though the hat was loaded with a quantity of snow and hail.

We expected confidently that the storm would have spent its rage in half an hour, but unfortunately this was not so. One hour grew into two, and still the fearful electrical discharges would not come to an end. Soon after five, my companion began to complain that he could stand the cold no longer, and thought it would surely be better to attempt the descent over the Bianco ridge at once. I refused emphatically and declared that I was not going to leave our niche so long as there was any lightning coming over the ridge from the west.

Towards 5.30 a north-west wind set in and the electric tension quickly relaxed. We decided at once

to be off on our difficult way. It is remarkable, but nevertheless true, that as soon as the uncomfortable lightning flashes stopped, I recovered my self-confidence.

The situation called for vigorous action; to make use of the time we had until eight o'clock so as to reach the lower regions by nightfall. What did I care for the raging wind which drove continuous snow and hail into our faces! We were surely not to be stopped by this handicap nor yet by the long Bianco ridge, though the latter was an unknown quantity to both of us.

The short stretch from our niche to Pizzo Bianco proved very bad, as the rock ridge was completely buried in snow, and wind and driving snow made things worse. Regardless of all this we got to our ice-axes on Pizzo Bianco by 6 p.m. A glance down the ridge told me that we should not be dealing with a nice city pavement. "If there is only no ice on the crest, we shall certainly get down."

The strong wind and heavy driving snow were very hard on my companion, who declared that he could not descend this steep snow ridge without steps. "Nonsense!" I replied, "no steps unless we strike bare ice! Turn round and climb down backwards! You'll find me like a rock; you'll not drag me off the ridge this evening! Let's get on with it, and reach the Prievlusa saddle before nightfall!" With this very strong wind, sweeping in gusts over the ridge, the six-foot-two Norman-Neruda could hardly have cut steps without being swept from the ridge; and since he had had little practice in step-cutting, anything that might lose us time must be avoided. Anything to get down!

Those who have traversed the Bianco ridge will

have some grasp of what our situation was just then. At the steepest places, where one had to keep entirely to the crest, we were certainly not able to do any double-quick march. And my companion had to halt very frequently and cling to the ridge, because the gale and driving snow took his breath away. By good fortune, no bare ice was encountered, and as soon as we had overcome the bad places on the ridge I was much relieved to note that my comrade also was regaining his self-confidence and vigour. We came further and further down, and the cruel wind gradually abated, or at least could no longer do its utmost, because the ridge widened out considerably at its lower end.

At 8 p.m. we came to the rock ridge which, as continuation of the Bianco ridge, descends to the Fuorcla Prievlusa. Unfortunately we found it under heavy snow. Clambering over it under such conditions did not appeal to me, since I had learned from previous climbers that the rocks by the Fuorcla Prievlusa were very trying. A glance to the left over the wall down to the Tschierva Glacier and a short calculation told me that this way, though very steep, would bring us quicker to the bergschrund than the route via the Fuorcla Prievlusa. The steep rock-drops below us, I judged to be manageable; and on the ice-wall just under them I had noticed a rib of snow leading down toward the bergschrund, which seemed likely to facilitate our descent. I may say that this wall as marked on sheet "Bernina" of the Siegfried map is much too high, some 1,000 feet. Actually, it should be 500 feet at most.

Any doubts on the part of my companion were ignored: "That is the shortest way down! And we can count on reaching the bergschrund before



J. Gaberell, Thalwil

ON THE NORTH RIDGE OF PIZZO BIANCO

dark, and perhaps before the second thunderstorm overtakes us, which is now approaching from the west." And we did get down, and safely crossed the bergschrund. The rock portion required the utmost caution and securing of the rope, while on the ice-slope, contrary to all expectation, we found conditions favourable.

It might have been about 8.45 p.m. when we lit our lanterns and hastened onward. But our trials were not yet at an end. Scarcely a quarter of an hour had passed before we were caught in another thunderstorm of unusual severity. Lightning and thunder followed each other in rapid succession, and the quantity of hail and rain which the heavens poured down upon our heads in one hour baffles description. It was all we could do to hold on to our axes and lanterns, and we would gladly have drawn closer to the rocks of Piz Morteratsch but dared not risk it on account of falling stones. Hence we were forced into the maze of crevasses of the Tschierva Glacier, which forms a kind of ice-fall at Point 2,771. It proved a toilsome passage indeed.

About ten o'clock, we finally reached the right moraine of the Tschierva Glacier, took off the rope which had bound us together for eighteen hours, and staggered on in pouring rain. At 11.40, two dead-tired comrades entered the Roseg Restaurant. A servant-boy with a lantern was expecting us, as he had already espied our light above Margun Misaun.

Neither of us demanded a complete rest. It is true we had sat down in the guest-room, but were obliged to get out again, because the surplus water ran from our clothes and boots on to the floor and threatened to flood it. The end of that unhappy yet memorable 18th of July was, that the boy ushered my companion

Norman-Neruda into the room which he had occupied three days before, and offered me a wooden platform above the empty horse-stall, which would have done honour to a galley slave. There was no straw nor hay; only a thin layer of musty, crumbling litter for my bed; and according to the boy there was no blanket available for me! This thoughtless treatment depressed and pained me, for besides Norman-Neruda's there were three unoccupied beds at the inn. To argue the matter with a servant-boy was not to my liking, and finally I thought to myself, "What do you care for wet clothes and a wretched, hard sleeping-place? Be glad that you are down in the Roseg valley with a roof to your head, and don't have to make the best of a compulsory bivouac on the Bianco ridge in the midst of a storm!" I took my wet coat for a blanket, and the rucksack served as a pillow. Five minutes later I was so fast asleep that all the thunderclaps of the Berninascharte and the Bianco ridge could not have wakened me.

A little before 7 a.m. I woke up shivering. The sky was clear, and as the slope to the west of the inn was already in sunlight, I made for it without breakfast, found myself a nice warm place on a big smooth rock, took off my wet clothes, spread them out in the sun, and basked in its warmth till even my underclothing was dry.

Our "new Bernina route," to which I had been unable to attach any practical value from the outset, was an enterprise which brought us pretty close to destruction; and it was certainly a mere chance that we came off with whole skins. The greatest mistake was that we had set out from Boval far too late for an undertaking of this kind. An earlier start would have got us over Piz Bernina before the storm broke.

Every time I think about that grim Bianco ridge traverse I come to the same conclusion: without a comrade of the stamina of Norman-Neruda, our expedition would very probably have come to a tragic end.

* * * * *

We left the Engadine on July 21st 1890, and travelling by *diligence* over the Flüela came to Davos, where we met Dr. Tauscher and his wife. Our plan had been to visit the Gross Litzner in the Silvretta group by the ordinary way before our journey to the Valais, but we modified it in favour of first attacking the Gross Seehorn by a new route and combining with it a traverse of the Gross Litzner.

On July 24th this undertaking was carried out from Alp Sardasca in fine weather, and was successful in every respect: the ascent of the Gross Seehorn from the south-west direct to the lower summit, and then the first traverse of the Gross Litzner from west to east.[1]

On both summits we admired the wonderful clear view. In the foreground, the beautiful pyramid of the Linard and the north face of the Verstanklahorn most often attracted our gaze. I called my companion's attention repeatedly to the latter. My telescopic observations showed that a direct ascent from the Verstankla Glacier, while probably not easy, would at any rate be possible. And when I wandered in 1894 with Captain J. P. Farrar from the Silvretta Hut over the Verstanklator, this assumption was strengthened. Of course at that time this north face did not look so black as thirty years later.

My representations carried no weight with Norman-

[1] See the description in *The Climbs of Norman-Neruda*, pages 28–39.

Neruda. "To-morrow we are off to the Valais. I don't want to sacrifice two days to this Verstankla north face," was his response.

After a very comfortable journey via Zürich-Berne-Lausanne, we reached Zermatt on the evening of July 27th. At that time the stretch from Vispach to St. Niklaus had to be covered on foot.

On July 29th we two alone traversed the Triftjoch to the Mountet Hut. On the next day it was raining, and when it cleared about midday we used this interval for making telescopic observations of the north face of the Dent Blanche, which rises very steeply from the western basin of the Zinal Glacier almost 3,500 feet to the summit. The result was not very promising.

Nevertheless, at 1.30 a.m. on July 31st we started from the Mountet Hut for a reconnaissance of this north face. We went to the right of the Roc Noir by lantern light across the heavily crevassed glacier to the north foot of Dent Blanche. A few minutes before 4 a.m. we attacked the forbidding wall at a point somewhere near the letter "h" in the word "Blanche" on the map. Then followed 7½ laborious hours across smooth, heavily-glazed rock slopes. Nowhere was there any *névé* or winter snow. At a level of fully 13,000 feet we gave up any further exploration. At 11.30 we climbed down a little, and then crossed eastward to the Zinal arête—also known as Viereselgrat—descended it, and reached the Zinal Glacier at 4.15. After passing to the east of Roc Noir, we were back at the Mountet Hut by 5.20 p.m.[1]

[1] Concerning this expedition Norman-Neruda notes: "There is no doubt that the route we chose on this attempt is the right way up given the right weather and the right conditions of snow and ice, which were not present in 1890 or '91; and

On August 1st [1] we intended to cross the Wellenkuppe and Obergabelhorn to Zermatt, and at 3.30 left the Mountet with this object in view. Following the Triftjoch route to a height of about 10,500 feet, we turned sharp to the right and up into the much-crevassed glacier region at the north foot of the Obergabelhorn. After brief deliberation we decided upon a direct ascent from here to the summit of the Wellenkuppe, in order then to force a traverse to the Obergabelhorn by its north-east ridge.

A steep ice slope about 800 feet high required 2½ hours of vigorous step-cutting work. At 9.10 we set foot upon the snow ridge of the Wellenkuppe (12,829 ft.).

The crossing and ascent to the Obergabelhorn, which we began at 10 a.m., proved difficult only at the great tower. We had to turn this gendarme on the Zinal side by long, wearisome cutting on a very steep ice-wall. At 12.45 we stood on the summit of the Obergabelhorn (13,364 ft.). After an hour's halt we returned to the Wellenkuppe by the same way and made a comfortable descent by the usual route, getting back to Zermatt soon after 7.

Unfavourable weather confined us to Zermatt for six days, and not until August 8th were we able to make our way up to the Riffelberg. This day was chosen for telescopic observations of the north-east

Klucker would not risk the dangerous upper part of the climb under such bad conditions. Up to our highest point, that I reckoned by aneroid as about 13,000 feet, Klucker never hesitated for a moment in choosing the best route, and I consider him to be the finest climber, whether it be over snow, ice or rocks, that I know, and quite unrivalled as the leader of a party."

[1] Not July 30th, as stated on page 389 of Studer's *Über Eis und Schnee.*

face of the Lyskamm [1] from the Hohthäligrat. In the course of the forenoon, while Norman-Neruda was doing some climbing with Dr. Tauscher and his wife on the Riffelhorn, I studied this Lyskamm north-east face minutely. By noon the three Riffelhorn climbers turned up on the Gornergrat, and after the meal it was agreed that we two, with the addition of Joseph Reinstadler, should attack the Lyskamm on the following day direct from the Grenz Glacier.

On August 9th this very difficult ascent of the Lyskamm (14,889 ft.) was accomplished. We left the Riffelberg at 1.30 a.m., reached the top at 2.30 p.m. and were back at the Riffelberg at 10 p.m.

There is no doubt in my mind that we did not undertake this bold climb up one of the mightiest of ice-walls entirely for the reasons given by Norman-Neruda,[2] and that a good many things happened differently from what he relates. We were spurred on, above all, by the attempt made shortly before 1890 by the excellent Viennese mountaineer, Moriz von Kuffner, with the guides Alexander Burgener and the two Kalbermatten. Nothing but the peril of avalanches had driven these brave men back. With the study of a possible ascent over the rib, which falls abruptly from the highest peak to the Grenz Glacier, my *Herr* troubled himself but little, leaving this and other matters entirely to me. I convinced him that this rib was feasible and free from any special avalanche danger. And he believed me.

[1] See also Appendix I.

[2] In the *Österreichische Alpenzeitung*, 1891. I questioned Norman-Neruda on this point in the summer of 1892, and he could not deny the force of my objections in any way. He merely remarked that he had written his article with a regard for certain well-known persons and that a correction would be difficult for him.



Cav. Vittorio Sella, Biella

LYSKAMM

From the Signalkuppe. Klucker's route runs straight from the Grenz Glacier below to the summit. In the background, left to right: Mont Blanc, Grand Combin, Dent d'Herens

When Norman-Neruda retired for the night at the Riffel Hotel, I reported to him that Emile Rey and Bich had appeared with Miss Richardson, with the idea of climbing the Lyskamm. I knew the outstanding ability of Rey and wanted to conceal our plan from him. My counsel was therefore to allow Rey to start before us, even though this would involve some loss of time. This was done.

We left the hotel at 1.30. The weather was not reassuring, for clouds were appearing and disappearing over Monte Rosa and the Lyskamm. By the Obere Plattje we caught up with Rey, as he was halting there. He inquired about our destination. When we told him it was the Lyskamm he remarked: "We shall meet up there," and went his way. As soon as he and his party were out of sight we also departed, but in haste. Turning off the Lysjoch track to the right we crossed the difficult glacier and before 7 reached the bergschrund below the direct Lyskamm rib.

Before us stood the north-east wall. And what a wall it was! Joseph Reinstadler (whose qualities as a guide I fully appreciate) as well as our *Herr*, began suddenly to feel—or had for some time been feeling—a loss of appetite for this wall. I soon saw that I should have to decide. "The rib it must be," I said. And it was.

At 7.30 we took the bergschrund. After that I began to cut steps in the steep hard snow.[1] Reinstadler relieved me after an hour. Soon we set foot upon the rib. It is not only very steep but also difficult, sometimes very difficult to scale. Snow with ice underneath made it all the more ticklish. For safety's

[1] Contrast Klucker's letter of February 12th 1928 to the *Alpine Journal*; see Appendix.

sake, only one moved at a time. The angle I estimated at about 60°.

Up on the left, far above our heads, appeared Rey, shouting jubilantly. His way was certainly the more comfortable. Reinstadler was much excited and wanted again and again to turn to the left from the glazed rib on to the snow. I was absolutely against this, because high above us I saw the most dangerous, great ice-cliffs with wall-like sides, which might break off. Resolutely I took the lead and stayed on the rib. However steep it was, it protected us at least from falling ice. After 11 a.m. we took a short halt.

Mist and clouds appeared, and it soon began to snow—a pleasant treat on this gigantic wall. But the rib led me safe. Suddenly the rock disappeared and I trod upon snow; so the top could not be very far away. I felt a joy that does not come every day in the mountains. The snow was good, and I had no steps to cut, since on leaving the rock-rib the incline decreased markedly. At 2.30 we set foot upon the small snowy crest of the east peak (14,889 ft.). It was a grim but gratifying victory, if one can so describe an act of folly.

Norman-Neruda treated us to a glass of champagne; he had reason to be satisfied with his guides.

There were rifts in the clouds. Rey, who was just descending with his party to the Italian Sella Hut, saw us and sent up a shout of applause. Towards 3 p.m. we left the summit, and making use of Rey's steps for a time, reached the Lysjoch in thick mist. Thence we took the familiar way down over the Grenz Glacier and from there over the broad Gorner Glacier. After an absence of 21½ hours we re-entered the Riffel Hotel.

Two days later found us in the Dom Hut with the idea of carrying out the ascent of the Dom (14,942 ft.) on August 12th by the usual route. Our party had become rather numerous, several friends of my companion (two gentlemen and two ladies with three guides) having joined us. This fact and considerations of courtesy hindered me from proposing to Norman-Neruda, while on the summit of the Dom, to get away from the company and descend by the Täschhorn and Mischabeljoch, to the Täschalp.

Nevertheless on the way down, not far below the summit, we separated ourselves from our mixed company and hurried in advance. Before long we turned off the usual route, which makes a wide curve towards the east, and climbed straight down through the maze of crevasses immediately to the right (eastward) of the icefall, so as to pick up the usual route again down on the Hohberg Glacier. That we were pretty swift-footed in those days is evident from the fact that the descent from the Dom summit to Randa—including 15 minutes' halt in the Dom Hut—took no more than 3 hours and 8 minutes. Actual walking time therefore, 2 hours and 52 minutes. This record run arose from the fact that the long-legged Norman-Neruda began to speed up the pace, whereupon the shorter-legged Klucker went still faster and was leading at the finish.

On August 15th we two encamped on the Stockje for an ascent of the Dent Blanche (14,318 ft.). Our bivouac was set up near the ruins of the Stockje Hut which had been destroyed a year before by an avalanche.

We left the Stockje at 2.35 a.m. on August 16th. After crossing the Stock Glacier in a northerly direc-

tion, and after some easy climbing up rocks we reached the southern end, Point 3,595, of the Wandfluh. A long ridge traverse—at least three kilometres—over the Wandfluh, mostly on snow, brought us northward to the peak proper of the Dent Blanche. And now we looked with expectant interest for the difficulties of which so much is written in Alpine periodicals. But we did not discover them. With the exception of one place about a third of the way up to the summit, where on account of a rise in the ridge, or gendarme, one has to keep to the left and exercise some care, we really did not meet with any difficult places worth mentioning all the way to the top. Although we had taken the climb very easily and had made two fairly long halts on the way, we stood on the summit at 11.35. Returning by the same route, we reached Zermatt at 9.40 p.m. by way of the Stockje, Zmutt Glacier and Staffelalp.

In spite of unsettled weather conditions, we started from the Riffelhaus at 2.15 a.m. on August 23rd, for the traverse of the Jägerhorn, heavily laden. On our programme the day's objective was: Jägerrücken for the east face of Monte Rosa! As early as 7.40 we stood upon the higher of the two summit teeth of the Jägerhorn (13,042 ft.). On the south side of the second tooth we found at eight o'clock a quiet place to rest, and here we waited for a favourable turn in the weather. By 11 a.m. clouds were drifting up from the south, and this induced us to leave the Jägerrücken and its Hut on our right, and to be content to take the first line of descent from the Jägerhorn to the Fillaralp.

It was a lengthy descent (nett altitude about 7,000 ft.). By 6 p.m., just as the rain was coming on, we

reached the humble Alpine chalets of Fillar. There we found lovely, dry mountain hay, so we decided to spend the night and to climb up to the Jägerrücken, in fine weather on August 24th.

But on the following morning we went down to Macugnaga in rain and wind, and had to wait there for our fair weather. Instead of setting out for the east face of Monte Rosa, we left at 3 a.m. on August 27th for the south foot of Cima di Jazzi (12,527 ft.), and reached the peak, over heavily snow-covered rocks, at 11 a.m., descending by the Findelen Glacier to Fluhalp and Zermatt.

IV

I met my mountaineering comrade, Norman-Neruda, again in Zermatt on August 3rd 1891. For four days we had nasty, wet weather and could not undertake anything. The 8th of August looked more promising, so we started in the morning with a fair-sized party by way of Zmutt toward the glacier. Leaving it on the left, we turned to the right, up the slopes of the Hohwängshorn to the insignificant Ebihorn (10,967 ft.). After the midday rest we separated ourselves from our companions and wandered alone over the Col Durand, and across the Zinal Glacier to the Mountet Hut.

At this point I should like to mention an event which seemed singular to us, since two older local guides were involved:

As we climbed up to he Col Durand, we came across fresh tracks which ed likewise across the pass. On the far side, the tracks continued down towards the bergschrund for about fifty or sixty yards, then suddenly turned round, ascended again for twenty yards, and disappeared behind a snow slope in the

direction of Mont Durand. Since we were unable to sight the makers of the tracks either on Mont Durand or elsewhere, we were somewhat mystified. From our point of vantage we could survey the bergschrund of the Zinal side only to right and left of us, but not directly below. For this reason we descended a little further than our predecessors and far enough to get a view of the whole length of the schrund. We observed that this could be crossed about seventy feet lower down. Ten minutes later we stood on the other side of the schrund and then walked in a northerly direction over the Zinal Glacier toward the rock island called "Roc Noir." We had hardly been descending a quarter of an hour when we heard voices coming from the right, and sighted three men climbing down a very steep ice-wall on the west slope of Mont Durand. They were two local guides and their German tourist, who had evidently regarded the bergschrund by the Col Durand as impassable and had therefore chosen this stupid and time-wasting descent. Two hours after us, these three bold mountaineers arrived at the Mountet Hut, looking small and sheepish. The situation was duly explained, but it did not win from their *Herr* any specially flattering remarks for my colleagues.

The 9th of August was devoted to the traverse of the Zinal Rothorn (13,856 ft.). Early in the morning we went by a route new to us up to the snow ridge "le Blanc" on the west ridge of the Rothorn. The rock ridge which follows usually offers a splendid scramble, but was unfortunately under snow and gave us some stiff work, especially the final rock tower, where all foot- and handholds had to be cleared of snow in a cold north wind. Nevertheless we reached the peak at 10.35. In a sheltered niche on the crest

we stayed in the sunshine until midday. The descent was of course made by the ordinary route.

For August 11th we had planned an ascent of the Nordend and the Dufourspitze. But owing to the indisposition of my comrade, this had to be given up at the Obere Plattje in the morning.

The next fine day was booked for the traverse of the Pointe de Zinal (12,487 ft.). Miss May Peyton, the future wife of Norman-Neruda, accompanied us on this climb. We left Zermatt at 3 a.m. on August 15th, climbed up to the Ebihorn, and after crossing the Hohwäng Glacier, reached the south ridge of the Pointe de Zinal at 10.30 a little north of the figure 3,481. So far we had taken things easily and included plenty of halts by the way. The climb over the south ridge up to the peak took 3½ hours. With the exception of one difficult tower near the top we found the ridge traverse lengthy, but not difficult. At 5 p.m. we stood once more on the Col Durand and were at the Mountet Hut in the evening.

Unfortunately, the hut guardian was not present. The 15th of August being a high Catholic holiday, he had no doubt gone down to Zinal. Rather fatal for us, as our provisions were coming to an end and we had wanted, weather permitting, to go to Zermatt on the morrow over the Trifthorn. Early on the 16th thunderstorms set in, and instead of making our way over the Trifthorn, we descended to Zinal in abominable weather, and out of the valley to Sierre.

The month of August 1891 brought no settled fine weather. Thus an ascent of the Dent Blanche with Miss Peyton was thwarted by a thunderstorm and snowfall after an uncomfortable bivouac in the Stockje. An intended ascent of the Lyskamm from the south, from the Quintino Sella Hut, which had been planned

for the 22nd, had likewise to be abandoned. In vain did we climb with Miss Peyton and my old and worthy colleague Moser from Täsch up to the Felikjoch on August 21st. Mist and snowstorms compelled us to beat a retreat before we had reached the pass.

The weather put us quite out of humour, and I grew weary of the whole business. My colleagues hung about in front of the hotels, or played cards in the inns, but I did not care to join them, so I had nothing to do but sleep and eat and sleep again.

On August 24th my companion Norman-Neruda told me that he would like, if I agreed, to go to Breuil in Val Tournanche for a few days and carry out some minor ascents from there. Miss May Peyton would come as well. "Certainly," I replied. And so on August 25th we set out for the Théodule Pass, climbed the easy Theodulhorn, and in the evening made our quarters down in Breuil at the Albergo del Giomein.

On August 26th we sauntered up to the Grand Sometta. Although it has an altitude of 10,391 feet, it really does not deserve the title "grand." We did not start until 9.15 a.m. and were at the top in three hours. I may mention as a matter of interest that we did not leave the summit until 5 p.m. And I will be guilty of a further indiscretion by disclosing the fact that my companion's climbing boots had the evening before got too close to the fire in the hotel kitchen. The consequences became manifest on our Grand Sometta expedition which put the boots out of action, so that he was obliged to borrow a pair for the following day from the guide J. B. Carrel!

The 27th of August brought us pretty decent weather at last. And so we journeyed in the morning out of the valley by way of Aouil with the object of

climbing at least the easy Château des Dames. Mounting somewhat laboriously the northern flank of the low Mont Rouss which lay in front, and then leaving it on our left, we reached the top at 10.45. After a brief halt we continued over the northern ridge and climbed the Tour de Creton without encountering any special difficulties. Returning over Château des Dames we also climbed the readily accessible Mont Rouss, sometimes called Gran Lago. At 5.30 p.m. we were back in the Hotel Giomein.

It may be of interest if I mention an incident which occurred at the beginning of our descent from Mont Rouss, and which might easily have had a tragic ending. Our descent, not at all difficult in itself, led over a snow slope of about 350 feet down on to a small snowfield. We were walking unroped. Without much ado, my companion invited Miss Peyton to take the snow slope with him in a sitting glissade. As the snow had got very soft I warned them emphatically not to risk it. But without heed to my warnings Norman-Neruda and the *Fräulein* seated themselves on the snow and were off. It happened as I had foreseen: the voluntary glissade became, to my horror, involuntary! Keeping my eye upon the two people sprawling in the avalanche, I bounded after it almost as fast as the masses of snow were moving. It was indeed most fortunate that the avalanche was not unduly large, so that it came to a standstill before reaching the edge of the precipice, but only by a narrow margin. The tribute exacted by the avalanche from the two for this journey was a hat and a pair of snow spectacles; the ice-axes, as it happened, were soon recovered. The rebuke which my companion had to take from me for his heedless behaviour was not a mild one!

On the morning of August 28th, the horizon indicated once more a change in the weather; so we went up to the Théodule Pass and made our way back to Zermatt in mist and wind.

* * * * *

On the evening of August 29th the weather looked hopeless. More or less disgusted, I had retired to bed at an early hour; but about 10 p.m. there was a knock at my door, and in came my comrade Norman-Neruda. Not without excitement he imparted the following: "It's about a bet; I was sitting over in the hotel with my Austrian friend, whom you know, and we were discussing several Alpine questions. Among others, the Fünffingerspitze, and especially the possibility of a second ascent. My friend is positive that no Tyrolese, much less a Swiss guide, would be able to scale that extraordinarily difficult rock peak. And as your name was brought in, I declared that I would get up there with you. My friend wagers 1,000 Gulden that we can't do it. But before taking up the bet I wanted to hear what you had to say about it."

Although I do not care much for bets, the proposition did not require lengthy consideration on my part. "Don't hesitate to accept the bet, for what others have done, we may hope to do."—For me, the chief thing was the opportunity of getting to know a new district and a mountain group of which I had already heard alluring accounts. And the 1,000 Gulden? They may have played a little part in my urging my companion to accept the bet; for I thought: if we manage the ascent, some portion of the booty may come my way; if we fail, I shall certainly not have to foot the bill.

On the following morning my comrade told me that his Viennese friend no longer wanted to make

the bet, but that, if I agreed, we should leave Zermatt on the same day and move eastward to the Langkofel group. "Agreed, my dear friend," was my answer. And sure enough, the afternoon train took us to Visp and down the Rhone Valley.

What my companion writes in his article, "Die Fünffingerspitze von Norden," about the "Kurier" Klucker is incorrect, neither is he quite accurate about the four days' sojourn in Lucerne. As a matter of fact, we travelled on August 30th with some friends of Norman-Neruda's to Vernayaz, and reached Lucerne on the evening of August 31st. Our involuntary stay there lasted only one day and not four, since both of us were sitting in Innsbruck on the evening of September 2nd, and on September 3rd we put up for the night at St. Christina in the Grödnertal.

Norman-Neruda heads his article, "The Fünffingerspitze from the North." This does not fit the facts any more than the statement that Robert Hans Schmitt and Johann Santner, who made the first ascent, conquered this mountain in the year 1890 by its south wall instead of by its east face—that is, if existing maps make any claim to accuracy.

After supper on September 3rd, we two discussed our Fünffingerspitze climb, which we had in view for the following day. Our idea was, in the early morning of September 4th to climb to the Langkofelkar; and from there, by way of the Langkofeljoch, to make for the entrance of the so-called Schmittkamin on the east face, also using this opportunity to examine the west face of the mountain carefully by telescope.

I have mentioned once before that early rising was not always our strong point. And so it proved again, unfortunately, on that morning of September 4th, to our later annoyance. Although I had roused my

companion vigorously at the appointed hour and had received an answer, "one" went to sleep again, with the result that we did not get away until 5 a.m.

Before leaving the white Dolomite road I noticed in the dawn a dark, snaky-looking object on the ground. "It's not a viper," I called to my companion, then picked it up, and behold, I had a rosary in my hand. "Throw it away, it will bring us bad luck to-day," retorted Norman-Neruda. "What, have you suddenly grown superstitious, my dear friend? That's not like you! I am going to keep it, for I see the thing differently! It means luck, and is evidence that the village belles of St. Christina slip out of bed earlier than the two who want to storm the Fünffingerspitze to-day," was my reply.

At first our way led through forest, then across pastures up to the Langkofelkar, which we reached a little after 7 a.m. We had recognized our mountain at once from among the six splendid Dolomite points which stood around us in a semicircle. We took a short rest in order to make telescopic observations of the whole of the west wall. To Norman-Neruda's question as to how I felt now about an ascent from this side, I replied: "As far as that perpendicular chimney to the left of the highest peak, we shall be all right. This chimney however will without doubt offer difficulties, but they can't be gauged with the telescope. The other couloir, more to the left and nearer the Daumenscharte, doesn't look practicable to me."

"Shall we make our attempt just the same?" he asked. "Of course," was my answer.

We packed our things together, walked up to the small Grohmann Glacier and crossed it to the left. Directly below the mountain's "little finger" we

crossed the narrow bergschrund and worked our way, partly through an ice gully, partly over easy broken rocks, to a hump of rock, where we deposited our rucksacks in a safe place, and where I changed my climbing boots for *Kletterschuhe*.[1] Mounting easily to the left we came to a small step, where my companion left his axe and jacket. In the course of our ascent, and in order to get to the main chimney, which was our means of access to the peak, we passed through two or three shorter chimneys, the lowest of which presented some difficulties. Proceeding further we reached a rocky pitch, from which a narrow rock terrace led to the left, to the impracticable chimney. That we used this terrace from our pitch in order to get a view into this chimney, is correct. On the other hand Norman-Neruda's supposition is wrong when he writes that we chose from below the left instead of the right chimney for our ascent. Not a word was said that morning down in the Langkofelkar as to whether my companion had a year earlier considered either the left or the right couloir for a possible line of ascent. As far as I was concerned, my telescopic observations of the west wall pointed to the right and not to the left chimney.

As my axe seemed superfluous for the hard chimney work apparently ahead of us, I left it where we stood, Norman-Neruda adding his hat and other smaller articles.

The next ninety feet were to show us whether we could reach the summit of our mountain from this side or not. In his description, my companion divides the chimney into three sections and found jammed boulders at two places. This does not quite tally

[1] Rope-soled boots, for Dolomite and other types of smooth rock.

with my observations and notes. In later years I had an opportunity of descending by this chimney, but never came across any second jammed boulder.

The chimney rises vertically for about ninety feet, is blocked above, and so to speak, overhanging. The chock-stone compels the climber beneath to steer his way out of the chimney-recess at the overhang, so as to reach up over the stone and thus pull himself up. The continuation of the chimney above is quite easy and leads without difficulty up to the adjacent summit ridge.

The ascent of the holdless chimney was a fine, stimulating bit of backing-up. But getting over the chock-stone was a ticklish and laborious task, for I was forced, while in a precarious position, to remove the loose stones from round the boulder. After overcoming this stretch, I discovered an excellent place from which I could secure my companion, who followed me. For a long time he was puffing in the chimney, mounting but slowly higher and higher. Only a few feet below the chock-stone he called up that I was to slacken the rope, because he would have to go down again in order to rest a little. But he was hardly below in the chimney before I heard a human voice, and thinking that it was Norman-Neruda's, I asked what he wanted. Back came the answer from beneath, that he had not said anything. At that moment we again heard voices, and Norman-Neruda shouted: "There is probably someone over on the Langkofel." "No, my dear fellow," I replied, "I hear talking on the opposite side of our mountain. Do hurry! There's certainly another party coming up over there!"

At last my companion got up to me. But at the same instant a head appeared on the summit ridge

hardly seventy feet above us—then a second one—and a third. "Confound it, now they've overtaken us," I exclaimed in vexation. "I told you this morning to throw away that rosary, because it would bring us bad luck," retorted my companion, as he realized that the other climbers would be able to reach the top about ten minutes before us. "No, my dear friend, the rosary is not to blame for our lateness; it's the warm feather-bed at St. Christina!"

The three heads were watching us from the ridge as we crawled through a hole in the chimney formed by a block lying there. Although my companion was less broad-shouldered than I, he struggled for a long while before he slipped through. It is not quite accurate that I was neglectful of the rope, while he crawled awkwardly through the "window"—even though a lady was sitting a few feet above my head! And besides, no rope should have been necessary for us two at this spot.

About ten minutes later, on the top, we greeted the second conqueror of the Fünffingerspitze by the Schmittkamin; Jeanne Immink, with her Dolomite guides, Antonio Dimai from Cortina d'Ampezzo, and Giuseppe Zecchini from San Martino di Castrozza. It was about noon.

We should have been glad to exchange routes for the descent with the Immink–Dimai party, but this was not practicable, since our rucksacks, boots, axes, etc., lay on the west face of the mountain, and it would hardly have been agreeable for the Immink party to have walked with *Kletterschuhe* over the Grohmann Glacier. Therefore we took the same way down. It went smoothly, but took twice as long as the ascent. A little above the Grohmann Glacier, falling stones compelled us to crawl into cover and to

wait there until sunset. Thus it happened that we did not reach the glacier until 6.20. In the evening we sat safe and sound at *Dossewirt* Schenk's in St. Christina.

This was my first climb in the Dolomites. Of my many Dolomite expeditions this one gave me the most pleasure, although no reward of 1,000 Gulden was attached to it. During the 'nineties I did all the routes then known up the Fünffingerspitze; and being able to compare their respective difficulty, I came to the conclusion that the Schmittkamin [1] is the hardest way up this rock pinnacle. The surmounting of the so-called *Kapelle* is probably the most difficult feat which the experienced rock climber can accomplish without artificial aids. The other places in the chimney below and above this *Kapelle* are mostly exposed, but not unusually difficult. As an odd fact, I might mention that between August 30th and September 6th 1897, I made four ascents of the Fünffingerspitze with W. E. Davidson—two of them on the same day—as follows: on August 30th, ascent Schusterweg and descent Norman-Nerudaweg; on September 2nd, ascent Schmittkamin, descent Daumenscharte; on September 6th, new ascent direct from the Grohmann Glacier to the Daumenscharte and summit, descent Daumenscharte; and directly afterwards, ascent to the Langkofeljoch and from there by a new route to the Daumenscharte and the summit, descent by the same way to the Langkofeljoch.

The strange thing about the first ascent in the year 1890, is that the two conquerors of the mountain, Schmitt and Santner, missed the easier routes and chose the very hardest one. And it is also a puzzle to me why a man like Stabeler, who made his attempt

[1] For Klucker's own ascent, see page 239.

with Darmstaedter in the year 1888, should have turned back in the Daumenscharte.

On the 5th of September, Norman-Neruda and I left St. Christina and wandered by way of the Col Rodella to Campitello in Val Fassa, where we met Herren Schmitt and Kraft at the *Gasthaus* Al Molino. On September 6th we said good-bye, for, despite rainy weather, Norman-Neruda went on with the two gentlemen to the Pala group, while his guide wandered eastward by way of Pieve di Livinallongo and the Falzarego Pass to Cortina d'Ampezzo, where he met his old friend Dr. Theodor Curtius.

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE SOUTHERN BREGAGLIA ALPS

CLIMBS WITH ANTON V. RYDZEWSKI, 1891–1900

I

"Führer Klucker. . . . Freund Barbaria. . . ."
RYDZEWSKI (*passim*).

IT took me weeks, nay months, to complete this report in manuscript. In arranging my material I was quite conscious of the fact that against one since dead I must not put on paper all that I could really have brought forward in my own justification without qualms of conscience.

What I write here may be said to represent but a minimum of what occurred in that tragic period of my professional activities. Having to go over so much unpleasant ground in my notes has made me almost sick in heart and mind.

Before proceeding to sketch a few individual climbs, I should like to furnish some condensed information regarding the bearer of the name "Anton v. Rydzewski."

Rydzewski was a Russian by birth, but at the time he came to us was living in Dresden. When I accompanied him on the first occasion in 1891, he might have been 54 years of age.[1] As far as I know, he did not begin mountain climbing until he was 49. He was of medium height, but not very strongly built. His arms and hands were especially weak, therefore in climbing operations the rope be-

[1] Born July 20th 1837; died August 24th 1913.

tween tourist and guide played a large, although covert rôle. His articles in year-books and periodicals cannot alter this fact in the least.[1] He was very sensitive to weather conditions. Overcoat, india-rubber cushion and umbrella had to be taken along on every expedition (climbs not excepted). He had trouble with his eyes. Being very near-sighted, he could make no survey without the help of spectacles and telescope.

But his worst points were the condition of his nerves and his boundless spirit of intrigue—evils which were intensified by a marked tendency to gout. When these were in evidence, association with him was extremely unpleasant. To sum up, I may say: Anton v. Rydzewski was a man who was handicapped by unfortunate traits of character that did not harmonize with the sublimity of the high Alps. In my opinion such harmony is not established by being a fluent and piquant writer!

For four or five weeks every year for something like a decade, all my knowledge and experience were placed at his disposal, nor was I ever deterred by modest pay from risking life and health whenever necessary; and that a man could so far forget himself as to drag into the mire without justification the honour and good name of his guide—to whom he was indebted for a number of the most beautiful first ascents—was and remains to my mind an act of ingratitude and spite. The cause of his indefensible attitude towards me was no doubt primarily due to the fact that from the first day I flatly declined to adopt that servility and drawing-room etiquette which he demanded even in the midst of serious work in the high mountains.

[1] "Despite my 56 years—like an eel!" Rydzewski to Klucker on the Sciora di dentro, July 17th 1891. No answer is recorded.

Intercourse and verbal relations with him were very ticklish. Everything had to be painfully weighed beforehand if one wanted to enter into conversation with him. And as I had no scales in my equipment, things were, as it often happened, not weighed at all, and this led in the end to friction and dissension. Yet with all these annoyances there was a kind of satisfaction—if it may be called such—in knowing that other guides who came into contact with this singular mountaineer were treated no better.

As second guide we had with us the Ampezzaner, Mansueto Barbaria, from Cortina. Only in 1893 and 1899 was he supplanted by others. Barbaria, a tall slender man of 41, was peaceable and honest. What I disliked about him was that his servility toward Anton v. Rydzewski degenerated into sheer cringing. He supported this unmanly behaviour with the words: "For the sake of peace!" A characteristic for which I did not envy him.

As a rock climber Barbaria was efficient,[1] and more at home on his Dolomite than on our granite. But when it was a case of ice and snow, which he hated, I had in him an anxious and inferior comrade. Personal initiative he lacked completely.

Rydzewski has described our climbs of the early summers of 1891 and 1892, in the 27th, 28th and 29th S.A.C. Year Books, under the title "Im Hochgebirge des Bergell." The ascent of Piz Cengalo direct from Sass Fura he has described in the 28th annual publication of the *Bollettino* of the C.A.I. of 1895, under the incorrect title, "Il Cengalo dal Nord," with the

[1] Sir Edward Davidson writes (Sept. 5th 1896): "Barbaria is undoubtedly an exceedingly fine rock climber, and admirably safe and careful."

equally incorrect addition, "per il Canalone del Badile." With regard to our ascents of June 1893, which we carried out with the guide Emile Rey from Courmayeur, reports have appeared about our first ascent of the Ago di Sciora in the 31st volume of the S.A.C. Year Book, and in the year 1923 about the climbs on Cima di Rosso from the north, Torrone Occidentale from the north, Cima di Castello from the east, Piz Badile by the east ridge and Ferro Orientale from the north. The first ascent of Piz Badile by the west ridge, Rydzewski described in the Zeitschrift of the D. u. Ö.A.V. of 1898. About all the rest of the climbs Rydzewski has published nothing, for the reason—I gather this from one of his letters—"that the editors of Alpine periodicals have abridged and changed my manuscripts too much!"

I must warn the mountaineer who might wish to use the abovementioned articles by way of information for his undertakings, because they are worthless for the tourist.

This is not the place to go into all the remarks in Rydzewski's writings which offend me more or less. Upon one passage, however, in the 29th Year Book of the S.A.C. which attacks me without grounds in a defamatory manner, I should like to throw some light. Rydzewski uses there the following words:[1] "The guide Klucker arrived in Promontogno on the appointed day, not like a *hinkender Bote*,[2] as in 1891, but

[1] S.A.C. Year Book, 1893, page 135.—Supplementary to the reproach "*hinkender Bote*" of 1891 see the 28th annual publication of the S.A.C. Year Book, page 151. Rydzewski writes there, amongst other things: . . . "In fine weather I frittered away nearly a week with small trips, because the local guide was not yet on the spot."

[2] Literally, "limping courier"; the title of the popular South German Almanac, "Lahmer hinkender Bote."

with exemplary punctuality—a performance worthy of acknowledgment, in view of his uncontrolled character."

Now the fact is that in June 1891, I came as soon as the message reached me naming the place at which I was to meet him. And this message reached me on June 5th in the Maderanertal. On June 6th I travelled via Gotthard–Lugano to Menaggio, and was in Promontogno on June 7th, before noon, where I greeted my singular tourist for the first time. I had thus placed myself at the disposal of this veracious gentleman on June 7th, and not as late as June 12th, as he saw fit to state. The next thing was, that as there seemed to be too much winter snow in the mountains still, and as Rydzewski was not feeling very well, I had better go home for six to eight days and await his report there. So I left my mountain kit in Promontogno and went to Fex. Herr von Rydzewski telegraphed on the 12th, and I was in Promontogno by noon of the same day. This and nothing else is the truth about the "*hinkender Bote*"! When I read his ungentlemanly accounts in the Year Books, I thought: Why this clumsy stab in the back from a man who was always brandishing the word "culture"? And it pained me no less that this effusion of the Russian found space in our own Year Book!

Since it had then been agreed between us that I should go home for a few days and report again upon receipt of his summons, I took leave of him. Just at that same moment, and as we were alone, he came up to me, took hold of my arm and, after he had stared at me for a little while with his piercing, grey eyes, asked: "Excuse me, Mr. Klucker! But you have been living pretty hard, haven't you?"—That was a bit too much! I withdrew resolutely from his touch

and replied indignantly: "I must protest against your tactless remark! It would probably be more sensible for me to return home and to keep on 'living' there, while you look for someone for your tours who hasn't yet lived." Thereupon he could not make enough excuses, and acted like a lunatic. I left him standing in front of the hotel, whither he had followed me, and wandered with mixed feelings toward Maloja.

But in the next days the Russian diplomat succeeded after all in getting round me, so that I made an expedition with him on June 13th.

I could easily realize that he had not the courage to offend me up in the mountains, still less to impugn the character of his hated Swiss guide, who was not as subservient as he wanted him to be. That is why he resorted to publicity. I shall not draw a parallel nor, shall we say, a comparison, between the qualities of character of the tourist Rydzewski and his Swiss guide. In view of his repeated fault-findings and his vindictiveness I gave Rydzewski notice for 1893, and again quite definitely for June 1894. But probably because he feared that I might introduce other mountaineers into the Bregaglia district, he did not let the matter rest, but still tried to re-engage me. In a letter, composed in the friendliest tone, he apologized in the following words:

"The tone of your letter has put me properly to shame for my cantankerousness; you are a much better man than I. I can only thank you for the confidence you have shown in me by initiating me into your plans, past and future.—More love towards my fellow-men and less harsh judgment can do me no harm. A short while ago I read through the pamphlet on our Bregaglia climbs in 1891, and . . . was ashamed, yes, ashamed, and took myself to task! I felt ashamed of having, by unkind word, presented people in a bad light who had risked their lives for me continually; and of having put in comments which

were out of place. I wonder that Dr. Dübi did not censor my copy more severely. Yes, I do feel ashamed. Such spleen as mine should really not be allowed an outlet through the pen."

These admissions on the part of Anton v. Rydzewski tell pretty much the whole story. Notwithstanding his fine words, my refusal held good pending a more satisfactory explanation. I could easily see that he regarded me as a means to an end, in connection with these Bregaglia climbs.

The further recognition that Rydzewski in his articles desires to pose as initiator, so to speak, of our new enterprises, was also distasteful to me, because it does not represent the facts by a long way. All he knew on his first visit to the Bregaglia in 1891 was that the highest Largo peak and some few Sciora peaks were still unclimbed. Everything else was as much *terra incognita* to him as to the South Tyrolese guide whom he had brought with him. Who called his attention to all the things is plainly seen from his admissions quoted above!

But why waste so many words? Alpine history is not concerned with such side issues, any more than that it investigates beforehand whether the performer of some great Alpine feat carried it out independently, or with more or less support from third parties.

II

Exploration

It would lead me too far if I tried to report in detail upon all the mountain tours with Anton v. Rydzewski between 1891–1900. In the following chapters I shall therefore confine myself to the most important features.

Dear Reader, will you follow me now in a friendly



A. Steiner, St. Moritz

VAL BONDASCA

In foreground, Bondo; in background, from left to right, Sciora Peaks, Pizzi Gemelli, Piz Cengalo, Piz Badile with North buttress leading down to Sass Fura

spirit to the mighty granite forms of Val Bondasca, and first of all to the abrupt frontier crest which rises between the Forcella di Bondo in the east and the Bocchetta Trubinasca in the west, separating the Swiss Val Bondasca from the Italian Porcellizzo and Codera valleys.

Bold and beautiful forms tower on this frontier wall, and they are particularly striking from the Swiss side. But the gaze of the spectator is attracted first and foremost by the shape and massive structure of Piz Badile and Piz Cengalo.

When I introduced the old Russian for the first time into this district in 1891, all the northern ascents were still untouched with the exception of the Forcella di Bondo and the Bocchetta Trubinasca, which are comparatively easy. Owing to the very long and steep ice and snow gullies, and the sheer rock walls of the Badilet, Badile, Cengalo and Gemelli, the ascents from Val Bondasca to the gaps (Colli) and summits in this sector of the frontier range are without exception difficult, and not for everybody to attempt.

By way of condensed information, I give below the dates of the first northern ascents to this frontier ridge:

1892

June 9th, Chr. Klucker with Rydzewski and Barbaria: first ascent of the Gemelli couloir to the Colle dei Gemelli, also first ascent of Pizzi Gemelli.

July 9th, the same party: first passage of the Cengalo couloir in ascent, also ascent of Piz Cengalo by the west ridge. From Colle del Cengalo, by the ordinary route.[1]

[1] The title of Rydzewski's article in the 28th volume of the Bollettino C.A.I. is not quite accurate. "Il Cengalo dal Nord" was carried out five years later by other climbers direct. Moreover it should read "per il Canalone del Cengalo," instead of "del Badile."

1893

June 19th, Chr. Klucker with Rydzewski and Emile Rey; second ascent of the Cengalo couloir, as well as first traverse of the Badile east ridge, crossing the mountain at the same time. Starting-point Sass Fura. Descent by the ordinary route to Bagni del Masino.

1895

June 22nd, Chr. Klucker with Rydzewski and Barbaria: third ascent and first descent of the Cengalo couloir.

1896

July 6th, Chr. Klucker with J. M. Schocher: first ascent of the Badile couloir and first traverse of the Colle del Badile. Starting-point Sass Fura. Descent to the south and traverse of the Passo Porcellizzo nord and the Bocchetta Trubinasca back to Sass Fura.

1897

June 14th, Chr. Klucker with Rydzewski and Barbaria: second ascent of the Badile couloir and first ascent of the west ridge of Piz Badile. Second traverse of the mountain. Starting-point Sass Fura and descent to the Badile Hut.

June 29th, Prince Borghese with J. M. Schocher and Chr. Schnitzler: first and direct ascent of Piz Cengalo by the north face. Starting-point Alp Sciora. Descent to Badile Hut.

1899

June 12th, Chr. Klucker with Rydzewski and porter Dandrea: first ascent of the Badilet couloir and up the north face to the west peak of the Badilet. Starting-point Sass Fura. Descent to Bocchetta Trubinasca and back to Sass Fura.

1900

June 20th, Chr. Klucker with M. Barbaria: first ascent of Punta di Trubinasca by west arête from Sass Fura by the Bocchetta Trubinasca and back to Sass Fura by the same route.

This was the record of ascents by 1900 at the conclusion of my climbs with Herr v. Rydzewski upon this frontier range from the north side.

Since then and up to the present day the following have been added:

June 22nd 1904, H. A. Tanner and I climbed Piz Badilet by the north face—eastward of Rydzewski's route of 1899.[1]

August 8th 1909, Miescher and Heller succeeded in making the first ascent of Punta di Trubinasca over the east arête, as well as the first traverse.

August 4th 1923, the guide Walter Risch with Alfred Zürcher of St. Gallen conquered the Badile north buttress for the first time in ascent.

The ascents of the Gemelli and Badile couloirs, as well as the scaling of the Cengalo by the north face, have not been repeated as yet. This does not surprise me, for rock scrambling is the dominating interest nowadays, and in connection with this, peak-bagging. And whenever or wherever human power and skill are inadequate, one resorts to artificial means: pitons, wall hooks, and for so-called new descents, though they may not be practicable in the ascent, rope rings! On none of my many mountain climbs have I ever carried pitons or rope rings in my rucksack, though of course I tackled only such problems as could be

[1] A vivid description of this climb is given in Herr Tanner's Guide-book, Forno–Albigna–Bondasca.

solved without artificial aids. Wall hooks and rope rings belong to the new trend in mountaineering equipment.

I should be exceedingly sorry if the ideal side of mountain climbing were to be driven out by mere sport. In my opinion, he who only goes in for the sensational in mountaineering is merely pursuing a sport.

After this digression I will at last begin on my reminiscences of Anton v. Rydzewski.

III

The Gemelli Couloir [1]

After my arrival at Promontogno on June 7th 1892, I had a lengthy conversation with Rydzewski about the climbs which had been on my programme for a long time. My proposals for the Bondasca region stood provisionally as follows:

1. To ascend Piz Cengalo from Sass Fura by the Cengalo couloir and to descend to the Badile Hut; this in case there should be no time to return over the Forcella di Bondo on the same day.

2. To attempt the long Gemelli couloir from Alp Eraveder or Alp Sciora and after its passage to try the ascent of the highest Gemelli peak.

Whether I presented these two proposals with more or less ardour may be open to question. But Rydzewski's sentence to the effect that I had suggested a traverse of the Colle del Cengalo with descent to Bagni del Masino, is to say the least an exaggeration. I shall not inquire whether this twisting of the facts was only in order to make the "pig" squeal under the devil's treatment.

[1] See Rydzewski's article in the 29th Year Book of the S.A.C. and the illustration of "The Twins" facing page 174.

For the present, Rydzewski decided to attempt Pizzi Gemelli by the Gemelli couloir direct from Val Bondasca. Thereupon it was resolved to ascend for this purpose on the following day as far as Alp Eraveder and to use the small hut there for the night.

At this point I beg leave to make a few remarks in regard to the designation " Gemelli." It is of little importance whether this double-pointed mountain mass be called Pizzi dei Gemelli or merely Pizzi Gemelli. The inhabitants of the valley call this mountain simply " I Gümei " (The Twins). Now the assumption that the name Gemelli applies solely to the highest summit ridge—which culminates in a crest fifty to sixty yards long and shows insignificant rises at its north-western and south-eastern ends respectively —is decidedly false. One who surveys the Bondasca group from the west, either from Soglio or any higher vantage-point, will see, east of Piz Cengalo or directly behind the Colle dei Gemelli, two sharp rocky points which rise up from the frontier ridge. The further rock pinnacle—visible in its narrow profile—is the highest point described above, 10,699 feet. The nearer point, which rises gracefully just to the east of the aforementioned Colle, appears from the valley to be as high as the further point, but is about 100 feet lower. It was these two summits, which from the valley, and especially from Piz Grande, Le Forcellette and Alp Sciora, are very effective—being separated by a deep depression—that suggested to the valley dwellers the name " Gemelli " ; not the highest peak only, which shows nowhere any gaps worth naming between the end points of the summit ridge.

This elucidation which supports the more usual name of this mountain, I regard as necessary because Climbers' Guides and Alpine periodicals simply ignore

the north-western and independent peak, or merely look upon it as a gendarme of the Gemelli.

Heavily laden, Barbaria and I set off with our Herr von Rydzewski, during the hot noon hour of June 8th 1892, through Val Bondasca up to Alp Eraveder (6,050 ft.). Since no porter had been engaged, each of us had to carry a well-filled, large and heavy rucksack of 50 to 60 lb. on his back. In view of the prevailing heat and the burdensome rucksacks we should have been glad to make a few more halts during the ascent. But since the resting-places had been precisely marked for the past year, and even the time of such pauses was fixed with watch in hand, we put up with our lot—for the sake of peace,—panting and perspiring until we reached our destination.[1]

Shortly after 3 p.m. we came to Eraveder, a lovely little place, and made our quarters in the small hut. On account of winter snow which was still lying behind the hut on the side towards the mountain, the ground inside was somewhat damp. By covering it with boards and sufficient mountain hay, we succeeded nevertheless in making up a pretty decent bed for the night.

After the necessary preparations for the following day, I looked near the alp for a quiet spot, where I could be unmolested while I made a close survey, in as far as this was possible, of the route I had proposed. For this purpose I used the small, but very powerful telescope which in those years I always carried with me in the Bregaglia mountains. Besides surveying the lowest part, near its outlet upon the Bondasca Glacier, I could follow the steep ice gorge of the Gemelli couloir all the way up to the snow saddle on

[1] Rydzewski records how unhesitatingly both guides carried heavy burdens.

the frontier ridge. For a long time I sat in the midst of flowering *Alpenrosen*, basking in the evening sun. The result of my telescopic observations was not absolutely positive. What I could establish was that the couloir as such would not confront us with any undue difficulties, But the high and evil-looking pitch which, midway up the couloir, divides the long snow gully into a lower less steep and a higher very steep half, caused me some doubts. The distance was too great for me to ascertain whether it would be possible to overcome this obstacle.

Rydzewski's data which relate to this couloir are undoubtedly incorrect. Thus he gives the width of the outlet, which he looks for on the flat Bondasca Glacier below—near the contour-line 2,160, instead of higher up—as about 500 yards. The width of this ice gully at its lower end will hardly measure 100 yards. Further, according to the Russian, one approaches the " Gemelli Glacier " through a gateway! How Rydzewski comes to put such a glacier into this ice ravine, I do not understand. Also, the total altitude of the steep step in the couloir would be, according to his data, at least twice as high as it actually is. When we made the ascent it measured 100 feet at the most.

Two thousand feet is too short an estimate for the horizontal distance. In reality it will amount to a good 3,000 feet. On the other hand, the height of 2,500 feet may be right, if one takes contour-line 2,220 for the lower basis and the elevation of the Colle dei Gemelli at 10,200 feet. This makes an average incline of hardly 45° as against Rydzewski's 51°. I may add that the Badile couloir, which is considerably steeper altogether, shows an average incline of 45° to 46°.

My South-Tyrolese colleague, who came to meet

me near the hut, expressed his dissatisfaction with our undertaking for the next day. He regarded such a dangerous and difficult tour as sheer folly, as tempting Providence, and advised me to leave it alone. "My dear friend, if the thing looks too dangerous and difficult to you, you'd better remain in the hut tomorrow and I will take the old man by myself! I'm not for turning back, if the weather is decent," was my answer.

Our conversation was interrupted by the approach of our *Herr*, which was just as well. I acquainted him with my observations in regard to our ascent. Then came painstaking preparations for the following day, and after supper we crept on to our hay beds.

At 2.30 a.m. on June 9th I took stock of the weather. Not a cloud on the horizon! In my presentiment of what was in store for us and especially on account of possible falling stones in the lower portion of the couloir, I would have gladly roused my companions half an hour earlier. But mindful of the explicit declaration of Anton v. Rydzewski in 1891, that he would not walk by lantern light over pathless ground, I always had to arrange things in suchwise that we should not start until dawn; and so it was, unfortunately, on that beautiful morning.

Leaving Alp Eraveder at 3.35 we mounted up to Alp Sciora, where we still found winter snow in some places. Our good South-Tyrolese comrade, silent and dejected, followed behind as if in a dream. We crossed the lower slopes of Alp Sciora in a southerly direction to the lateral moraine of the Bondasca Glacier, crossed it, and continued over the lower part of the glacier directly to the outlet of the Gemelli couloir.

On reaching its avalanche cone we made a short

halt, so that, as the snow was frozen hard, Barbaria might strap the crampons on Herr v. Rydzewski's boots, as behoves the attentive guide. Moving on at 4.20 we gradually ascended over good avalanche snow towards the entrance to the couloir, which we reached by 5 a.m. We roped up at once. Since the beams of the rising sun were already touching the upper north-east face of the Cengalo, I urged my companions to follow me as quickly as possible.

Before long I heard from above the ominous sound of falling stones. "Look out back there!" And at the same instant a chunk as thick as your fist came whizzing over our heads. "Faster—faster, and look sharp overhead!" I warned my companions emphatically. The further the sunbeams crept down the face of the Cengalo, the more frequent became the showers of stones.

Suddenly I felt a strong pull on the rope. A hasty glance to the rear, and I saw my colleague, who followed next to me, standing with clasped hands and agitated face, gasping out the words: "Andiamo per l'amor di Dio di ritorno!"—"You stupid coward! In that case we should certainly be killed by the stones," I retorted. "Hurry forward, quickly, so as to get to the crevasse below the vertical step as soon as possible. It promises good protection."

In silence, looking keenly upwards and holding the rope tight in my hand, I went on resolutely, always alert to dodge the crashing stones.

Another vigorous pull on the rope! Without turning back I inquired after the cause of this disturbance and heard the old man, who brought up the rear, exclaiming breathlessly: "I simply can't climb any longer at this rate! . . . If we had only started half an hour earlier this morning!" There was

nothing uncertain about my reply: "That comes," I said, "of shirking lantern light in the early morning. And yet we've got a lantern and all its belongings safely packed in our rucksacks!"

It was really high time that we reached the crevasse, for by now (about 6 a.m.) it was positively hailing stones. Luck was certainly with us. The schrund with its overhanging upper lip was filled up firmly at the bottom, so that we could use it with comfort and without hesitation.

Meanwhile the sun carried on its destructive work on the Cengalo face. But as stone showers brought about by the sun's rays are seldom of long duration, I had reason to hope that we might not be kept too long inactive in our hiding-place.

A little before 7 a.m. we were able to leave the schrund. We crawled forth, and skirting our abandoned crevasse to the left, we soon afterwards reached the foot of the practically vertical ice-wall, which extended across the whole width of the couloir. A close scrutiny showed the Cengalo face on the right-hand side to be smooth, and a passage that way out of the question; while to turn the obstruction on the left, over the smooth, ice-coated flanking slabs of the Gemelli north ridge, was even less to be thought of! —Therefore the one solution lay straight up the ice-wall, which is a little over 100 feet high.

Behind me the Cassandra voices were again to be heard. The one would of course have preferred to climb down again; the other, devoid of any sense of direction or calculation, pleaded for an attempt by the icy slabs on the left. I let them go on chattering and discussing, but planned out my ascent in the meanwhile.

A little more than a third of the way up the ice-wall

I noticed a small niche, about three feet wide. From thence upwards, a narrow sloping ledge mounted steeply on the right to a point below where a stone block was stuck in the ice. From the end of this ice ledge and up to the left of the block of stone it was no more than ten to fifteen feet to the upper edge of the ice barrier.

My calculation was as follows: "Our rope of ninety feet length (not sixty-five feet, as Rydzewski has it), twelve feet of which will be lost in roping up, will not reach the whole distance; but on the other hand, if the niche visible in the ice-wall should offer a sufficiently firm place for my companions, the thing can be done for certain."

I set to work shortly after 7 a.m. The first forty feet up to the niche (according to Rydzewski, ten to fifteen feet!) required a great deal of hard work. Having reached the depression in the wall, I was able to determine with satisfaction that there was enough room for both of my companions, and at once requested Barbaria to follow me. Sideways and a little higher up, I hacked out a few steps for myself; and then, not without some difficulty, our *Herr* was brought up to the niche.

Barbaria had to unrope, in order to pay out more rope to me, until there was a length of about seventy feet between us. "No nonsense down there in your cosy corner for a bit!" I called to them, and continued cutting on the ice ledge and up to the stone block. It was no easy job, since, owing to the overhanging wall, I had to use my axe in a crouching position for some distance! But everything turned out all right, and at last I reached the block, which was frozen into the ice. Seven steps upward on the left, and I stood above it—and the obstacle which

had kept me busy for a full hour, was overcome. The clock said 7.55.

Eight minutes later my companions, who managed very well across this difficult ice passage, were also up on my level. The reason why I have described the surmounting of this spot so fully is because it represents the limit of what is practicable on an ice-wall.

After equalizing again the length of rope between us, we entered the upper half of the couloir. At first the snow was excellent, so that a step could be cut in two strokes. Climbing to the left and then to the right of an avalanche gully, we cut steps alongside the buttress of the eastern gendarme of the Cengalo. We turned a crack in the snow on the left and, as the incline grew steeper, came to the topmost cross-schrund in the couloir. At its left end we stumbled upon a small hollow in the snow, which seemed to be made for our much-needed rest.

Here the sunbeams reached us—a delightful relief after the fearful and frosty ascent in the ice gully, with all its tension. From this point upwards the slope of the couloir increased markedly, attaining in the last 350 feet an incline of 55°.

Refreshed, we continued the ascent at 9.45. The layer of snow upon the ice grew thinner and thinner and finally forced me to cut steps, so that the stretch from our resting-place to the Colle dei Gemelli, which was perhaps 700 feet, took fully 2¼ hours. A few minutes after midday, breathing more freely again, we set foot upon the Colle dei Gemelli, about 10,200 feet.

A glance from the snow saddle eastward to the south face of the highest Gemelli, which rose, scarce 100 yards away, from the Gemelli Glacier for about 500 feet to the summit ridge, left no doubt in my

mind that an ascent of this south face would not offer any great difficulties.

Since my own notes of the ascent differ from Rydzewski's publications, I should like to submit the following correction:

According to my notes, we began the ascent of the south face of the highest Gemelli at 12.30. We clambered diagonally to the right, up two-thirds of the wall, where I left my rucksack on a projection. Thence we changed the direction of our ascent and climbed leftwards up to the summit ridge, and on to the point, which overtops the ridge by about ten feet. The whole ascent took little more than thirty minutes, which proves that the climbing was not difficult.

It was easy to determine from here that the pinnacle rising some eighty feet distant, at the north-western end of the summit ridge, was higher than ours. This prompted a suggestion to scale it. Herr v. Rydzewski however declined on the ground that it would waste too much time, since he preferred to go up the southern pinnacle.

But I was not to be deterred, and clambered up alone, made a cairn with five or six stones, and rejoined my companions again after barely ten minutes' absence. In his article, Rydzewski passes this fact over in silence.

Leaving the central point, we descended southward to my rucksack, traversed eastward to the south ridge, and then scaled the southern pinnacle of the mountain, reaching it somewhat after 2 p.m.

We had to abandon a traverse from the central to the southern pinnacle, owing to snow corniches on the ridge in two places.

The whole summit ridge shows four small elevations, and the depressions lying between are insignifi-

cant, at any rate not marked enough to justify the application of the name " Pizzi Gemelli " to just this stretch of ridge.

We left our southern Gemelli point at 3 p.m., clambered down to my rucksack by the same way, and descending further reached the Gemelli Glacier at the foot of the summit wall. After following this for some distance in a southerly direction, we crossed the southern ridge or southern buttress of the Gemelli toward the east, and arrived in the snow hollow east of this ridge at 4 p.m.

Under a hot sun, we wandered eastward to the Forcella di Bondo, setting foot upon the gap at 5 p.m. A fresh little breeze from the north revived our flagging limbs. And after a beautiful walk on excellent snow down the usually broken Bondasca Glacier, we stood not later than 6 p.m. upon its right lateral moraine, not far from Alp Sciora.

Never, either before or since, have I crossed the Bondasca Glacier under conditions as favourable as on that 9th of June after our Gemelli expedition.

At 7 p.m. we made our entry into Alp Eravader. Since we were planning to make our quarters here again two days hence, we left everything that could be dispensed with in the hut. At 7.40 we departed, and marching in the twilight down Val Bondasca, we reached the Hotel Bregaglia in Promontogno shortly after 9 p.m.

To the present day my memory of this wonderful Gemelli climb, which ranks amongst the most difficult of my Alpine undertakings, is as vivid as if it had been made only yesterday. And whenever I recall the details of our ascent in the Gemelli couloir, I seem each time to hear the sound of stones striking against the Cengalo face, and the uncanny whirr of

the missiles through the ice gully. But my beloved mountains had a care for me, and spared the life of their admirer.

IV

Punta Rasica

From June 21st to 29th 1892 we sat together, with Barbaria, in the Forno Hut. We carried ambitious plans in our pockets, but had no luck with the weather. We did manage on the 22nd to get to the Colle Rasica for a close inspection of the awkward granite point of Punta Rasica which rises up to the west of this Colle. After hard climbing we reached the latter, but had to turn back owing to fresh snow and strong wind.

On June 27th we made another assault upon the Rasica from the Forno Hut. The ascent to the upper Forno Glacier, to the bergschrund below the Colle Rasica, proved very laborious for me on account of deep, fresh snow which the storms of the previous days had swept together up there. Nevertheless and notwithstanding the prolonged cutting which followed, we reached the Rasica gap by 7.15. The further ascent took us at first some 130 feet up the south side of the east arête. Thence we climbed the latter itself for a short time, next traversing across the north-east face of the mountain. After crossing two very steep patches of snow on this face, we advanced by a comparatively easy clamber to the south foot of the summit pinnacle. As I set foot upon this spot, one glance upward at the giddy, sharp, and perpendicular crest told me at once that I should be able to get to the top. So I called down below: "It's all right!"

Now I had not forgotten Rydzewski's remark of June 7th 1891.

As we stood together, I observed the astonished faces of my companions. I could not help remarking: "Now it will be seen who has squandered his powers and who has preserved them!"—But to myself I thought: "To-day you will get something on account, old man!"

Next came Barbaria's manœuvre—rope-throwing. A small nick was visible in the sharp rock crest above, about forty feet up. He wanted to get the rope into this particular nick, and succeeded eventually by tying a stone to the end of the rope.

I regarded this rope device as something rather insecure and of doubtful value. Hence I disdained its aid, and in a short time clambered up to the nick in the ridge, took up the end of the rope which had been wedged in with so much trouble, and mounted (with difficulty at first) to the very top. Here I could hold them properly.

It had been agreed that when they reached the final arête Barbaria was to assist Herr v. Rydzewski, and himself bring up the rear. I knew well enough how our *Herr* would surmount the vertical and very sharp rock ridge. The only thing that would get him to the top was hoisting, and on that day I was just in the mood for that kind of progress.

Below, my chief began his arduous passage and the hoisting set in vigorously and mercilessly. Higher and higher came the puffing and blowing. Completely exhausted and gasping for breath, he stood at last by my side, and at once I offered him the small niche beside the summit as a resting-place. After he had recovered somewhat, I threw the end of our ninety-foot rope down to Barbaria, laid my hand upon his

shoulder and said: "You may perhaps remember your remark of a year ago, when we first met in Promontogno, 'You have been living pretty hard, haven't you?' I have just noticed that you have evidently lived even harder! So I think we're quits on this point!" An annoyed look and a silencing gesture were his only response. Perhaps he was thinking: "If I were only safely down again!" Five minutes later the rope-artist Barbaria had likewise joined us on the summit (10,853 ft.).

After a short halt we began to descend. We reached the Forno Glacier safely by way of the Rasica gap, ice-wall and bergschrund, and wandered—in high spirits, I admit—towards the Forno Hut, which we entered before 2 p.m.

On the following morning (4.35) we stood in full marching order before the hut. We were off to climb Cima Cantone, 11,010 feet, by its north-west ridge—a new route.

Crossing the Forno Glacier to the east slopes of the Scalino-Cantone ridge, we ascended westward to the Forcola dello Scalino.[1] The traverse of this Cantone ridge to the summit is an easy but very delightful ramble. We were standing on the peak as early as 9.15. The weather was glorious. We chose a descent eastward, straight down a long snow slope on to the Forno Glacier, combining with it the first traverse of Cima Cantone.[2] After a rather hot walk over the Forno Glacier, we reached our hut before 1 p.m.

[1] Not Cantone Pass, as Rydzewski calls it in the 29th edition of the Year Book of the S.A.C.

[2] The angle of the snow slope given by Rydzewski in the aforesaid Year Book as averaging 20° is incorrect. It comes nearer to 40°.

For June 29th we had planned, as our last climb in the Forno district, the ascent of the virgin Cima Vazzeda. Leaving the hut at 4 a.m. we went to the Colle Vazzeda and to the bergschrund at the foot of the north-east face.

The ascent from the bergschrund to the summit, which at first is very steep and leads up mainly to the east of the north ridge of the Vazzeda, is not unduly difficult, but requires great caution on account of loose stones. Arriving at the summit rocks, we traversed over slabby rock to the left on to the east ridge, by which we reached the summit of the Vazzeda (10,833 ft.) at 8.25.

One can hardly cease examining and admiring the many kinds of stone that go to make up this mountain. In addition, there was lovely weather and a magnificent view, so that an hour had passed in no time. During our halt, seeing that it was still early in the forenoon, I proposed that instead of returning by the same way we should attempt the traverse to Cima di Rosso. This met with the *Herr's* approval, though he had some doubts as to whether it might not prove too much of an undertaking. This touching thoughtfulness was all grist to Barbaria's mill, and he began to be quite disinclined for the attempt. Still, as it turned out, we attacked the sharp rock ridge leading to Cima di Rosso at 9.30.

The clamber over this bizarre ridge was to me a *Wanderung* of rare beauty. No great difficulties were experienced anywhere. I found the last ascent, from the lowest point in the ridge to Cima di Rosso over the delicate snow arête, particularly delightful. A little more than two hours after leaving the Vazzeda summit, we stood, highly elated, upon the snow peak of Cima di Rosso (11,049 ft.).

After a welcome rest,[1] we left the peak at 12.30, descended to the Forno Glacier by the usual route, and were back at the Forno Hut by 2 p.m. And later on the same evening, we went down to Promontogno.

V

Exploration of Piz Badile, North Buttress

On July 9th 1892, after our Cengalo climb with ascent by the Cengalo couloir and return over the Forcella di Bondo, I separated myself on the moraine of the Bondasca Glacier from my companions Rydzewski and Barbaria, who went down to Promontogno, and wandered alone and at peace over the Cengalo Glacier and the Viale to Sass Fura, where we had left some belongings.

July the 10th, a Sunday, was really a "Lord's Day" for me. Our agreement made on the evening of the 9th was to the effect that my two companions were not to come up to Sass Fura until the afternoon of the 12th, and so I decided early on the morning of the 11th to use the fine weather for reconnoitring the Badile north buttress, which abuts directly against the rocky structure of Sass Fura.

By 5 a.m. I was at the foot of the buttress, shortly afterwards divesting myself of jacket and boots. I mounted up briskly—at some places with effort—now on the crest itself and then again on the right flank. A little before 8 a.m. I came to a small projecting boss [2] on the crest. To advance further up

[1] During this "welcome rest" Rydzewski started for a stroll along the snow ridge; thereupon Barbaria rushed after him, and held him firmly by the seat of his trousers. Klucker sat by, grinning sardonically.—S.A.C. Year Book, 29, p. 161.

[2] "From this boss I could overlook the Engadine." (Letter to Colonel Strutt, Nov. 1st 1924.)

the ridge, or to the right of it upon the flank, appeared out of the question. On the other hand, to go to the left from the ridge and over the slabby wall up to the ridge again seemed possible, but at best uncommonly difficult and very daring. The spot, where I stood on the crest that morning, was a little higher than the adjacent Badilet (10,389 ft.). The object of my investigation achieved, I decided to descend again.[1] This performance, without a doubled rope and with tattered stockings on my feet, was no joke, but in those years we did not take rocks very seriously.

The final conclusion of my reconnaissance of July 11th 1892 ran in my own mind as follows: "While I am acting as guide I am not going to do any experimenting on the Badile north buttress with old Rydzewski, who cannot look after himself on difficult rocks. It's not the sort of place, up there, to be practising quaint methods with him." However, this harsh sentence was re-written in somewhat milder terms later on for his benefit, and was to the effect that what lay above the point where I turned back, was very smooth and holdless, and extremely exposed; and in my firm opinion hardly climbable without artificial means.

VI

Round About the Ago di Sciora

Anton v. Rydzewski wrote a lengthy article about the first ascent of this rock-needle in the 31st volume of the S.A.C. Year Book under the title, "Eine Hochtur im Bergell."

He mentions in it that before 1893 he had made

[1] "I was unwilling, strictly in accordance with my principles, to ascend anything that I might *not* be able to descend" (*loc. cit.*).

two unsuccessful attempts upon the Ago, without however going into the reasons for his failures. Therefore I should like to revert briefly to the history of the first ascent of this proud mountain.

During the first ascent of the Sciora di dentro with Curtius and Wiesner on August 14th 1888, I was able to survey at close quarters from its top the south side of the Ago di Sciora. My conclusions were as follows: If the loose sections of rock flanking the western side of the small Ago Glacier can be climbed, it must be possible to scale the Ago tower. And from that moment I had added the Ago di Sciora to my programme. If the ascent was not carried out earlier, it is due to the fact that I was unable to interest anyone in the project.

On June 15th 1891, an ascent of Piz Zocca from the north gave me the opportunity to make sure with the telescope that the rocky bulwark between Sciora di dentro and Punta Pioda could be scaled from the Ago Glacier. And five days later, during a conquest of the Sciora di dentro by its south ridge,[1] I was able to confirm my impression of 1888 by a telescopic survey of the south wall of the Ago.

After I had called Rydzewski's attention repeatedly to this possibility, I could not understand why he ignored it and persistently favoured an ascent which was—for him at least—impracticable.

On the evening of June 10th 1892, Rydzewski and I stood by the Eraveder hut discussing the next day's tour. My *Herr* was stubbornly set upon attacking the Ago di Sciora from the north. For such an attempt our way could only lie through the long Sciora couloir to the Forcola di Sciora. In vain I tried to convince him

[1] In the S.A.C. Climbers' Guide this climb is dated July 17th 1891.

ascent of the Ago, which was eventually carried out after all, since in the Year Book of the S.A.C. Rydzewski has covered it fully. He has published, indeed, far too many confusing details, especially in regard to our route of ascent, so that for anyone intending to choose the same route his data are useless and even misleading.[1]

After the attempts of the year 1892, we determined at last, on June 4th 1893, to attack the Ago di Sciora from the Albigna Glacier, by the route I had proposed. In the place of Barbaria, Emile Rey of Courmayeur was now my companion and fellow-sufferer. Valiant Rey, who had to forfeit his life on the Dent du Géant in the summer of 1895.

At great length and not without piquant incident he describes our vain attempt to clamber up to the left, below the steeply-inclined slab which interrupts the succession of rock bands running up to the Bocchetta dell'Ago. At least two feet of winter snow lay on this slab on that 4th of June, so that it seemed to me rather risky to cross it. That is why we wanted to go round this steep place to the left. Proceeding cautiously and belaying our ropes, we finally did manage it.

Amusing—to put it mildly—is his account of the interlude at our resting-place near the Bocchetta. The gully which runs up about fifty yards eastward of the Bocchetta and ends at the vertical wall above the Ago Glacier, he calls "Barometerschlucht," because owing to Rey's carelessness his aneroid barometer fell down there.

The sudden disappearance of the altimeter gave rise

[1] The main features of the route of approach and ascent to the Bocchetta dell 'Ago are well presented in the S.A.C. Climbers' Guide.

to a very hot debate between my companions, which threatened never to end. I even heard words to the effect that under these circumstances the ascent of the Ago would have to be abandoned! Meanwhile I had espied and recovered the wayward instrument, which lay about 130 feet below us in the snow of the gully. But the loud-voiced chatter would not cease. My patience was exhausted, and I remarked that it was about time to leave off this squabbling, for I felt as if I were in the vegetable market of a big city; and furthermore, that I should like to know whether the ascent of the final tower were to be taken in hand or not. In the latter contingency I should clamber up the Ago tower alone! This had its effect, and shortly afterwards we resumed the climb. Without meeting with any great difficulties, but very much exposed almost the whole way, we reached the highest pinnacle of the Ago di Sciora, 10,502 ft. The descent was carried out by the same route and without any inconvenience. Rydzewski's account of the last phase of our ascent, namely from the spot where one gets to the western edge of the summit, in order to traverse towards the right on the south-west summit-wall, is again not quite accurate and somewhat arrogant. Not all of the printed narrative fits the facts. He writes:

"While Rey and Klucker were on their ticklish errand, I stood upon a narrow, snow-covered ledge resembling the broken edge of a plate and leading northward from the Ago ridge towards Punta Pioda; my left hand was braced against the ridge which rose before me like a horse's neck, my right held the rope, since even guides can fall."

To explain this:

The place he describes is not a rock ledge leading towards the north, because we did not touch the northern side of the mountain at all that day. There

is however a small projection on the west ridge of the mountain, just big enough for one person to stand or sit upon, which serves at the same time as a point of anchorage for the succeeding traverse to the right on the summit wall. I did not find any snow on this projection on June 4th, nor on any later occasion. The ridge is so exposed that no snow will stay there very long, not even in winter.

Having completed the traverse on the summit wall, and having reached by an upward climb the summit ridge to the right of the large block of rock which rests thereon, I secured Rey, who stood below me and was having his hands full to get our *Herr* up to the projection just mentioned. Naturally, when Rey traversed he was secured from above.

A glance across the block of rock down to the west ridge—while Rey was traversing—revealed our hero and chief near the ridge projection clinging with both hands to the neck of the granite "horse," so that he had no hand at his disposal for the rope—"since even guides can fall!"

I may be allowed a few corrections and explanations in connection with Rydzewski's account. He states at the outset, that on June 4th we had really planned to attack the Ferro Orientale (also called Punta Qualido) from the north side. This is not quite correct, because we had already decided down in the valley, that if weather permitted, the attack on the Ago was to be made in any case and without hesitation. Only if there should still be too much winter snow on the rock bands of the lower Ago wall was the ascent of the Ferro Orientale to be attempted instead. When we got a view of the Ago rocks that morning from the upper Albigna Glacier, we could see that the snow on the first rocks would not hinder us unduly; there-

fore there was no wavering about our choice of the Ago di Sciora.

In the same chapter he writes of the Ferro Orientale: "Since from my previous ramblings I knew it to be an easy peak," etc. This seems to me a curious remark, since before June 28th this wise Russian had never been on the Ferro Orientale, nor even very close to it. His nearest approach was in 1891, when we ascended Piz Zocca. And how easy it is to climb the Ferro Orientale from the north, he was able to find out for himself on June 28th 1893, on which day he and I carried out the ascent alone. The passage of the bergschrund and snow wall, which led to the Colle del Qualido, also one place on the east ridge of the Ferro, made him so uncomfortable that he more than once wanted to turn back. His guide however did not encourage this inclination.

With these remarks let us leave the much-courted Ago di Sciora, which I have since scaled ten times, and before the conclusion of my reminiscences of Herr v. Rydzewski, go once more up to Sass Fura. This magnificent, wooded rock fortress back in Val Bondasca is indeed a worthy stepping-stone to the Badile north buttress.

VII

The Badile Couloir

The following sections, which relate in condensed form a part of my experiences with Anton v. Rydzewski from 1896 to 1898, might suitably bear the heading: "Cengalo by the North Face and Fuorcla Tschierva-Scerscen from South to North." The second tour arose out of the first, and was to serve as quits for the former.

Noteworthy undertakings stood on the 1896 programme which Rydzewski had set himself, in his eagerness to accomplish great feats. This was obvious from the fact that between June 23rd and July 11th he allowed himself the luxury of three guides. The addition to our party was no less a personage than my friend Johann Martin Schocher of Pontresina, since deceased.

Our aims were certainly not trifling ones: Piz Badile direct by the north buttress, and Piz Cengalo likewise direct from the north! The former tour was not on my programme, because I had struck it out—at least for Herr v. Rydzewski—as early as 1892; Cengalo by the north face was still on my list, but only with very sharply drawn reservations. It is a well-known fact that it is easier to concoct programmes from conversations with experts than to carry them out.

As early as 1892 I had expressed my willingness to attempt a direct ascent of Piz Cengalo by its north face, but only on the following conditions: 1. The accompanying guide must be a good ice-man. 2. The large and threatening corniche, which crowns the long summit ridge up to the month of July, must have disappeared. 3. The average day temperature must not be too high, because in the event of *Föhnwind* the danger from avalanches and falling stones on that face is very great. It is not my fault that during our sojourns in Promontogno in those years these conditions were never entirely fulfilled.

If Herr v. Rydzewski thought that the engagement of Martin Schocher might prompt me to relax my conditions, he was mistaken, because neither the presence of this notable reinforcement, nor still less the extra reward of 100 francs, which was repeatedly

held out to me, could shake my resolution regarding this ascent.

Meanwhile the old Russian did not breathe a word about the Cengalo ascent to Schocher, for he had his mind fixed upon the Badile north buttress, and Schocher was to have led him up it.

This was the position in reference to Rydzewski's programme, when on June 26th 1896, he set out for Sass Fura in company with three guides and a porter. I mention the porter specially, because of the honour conferred upon Schocher by exempting him from carrying any equipment other than his own personal baggage. And yet a tent weighing 31 lb. had to be dragged up, as there was not nearly enough room in the small shepherd's hut for five persons.

We reached Sass Fura shortly after 4 p.m. and arranged our quarters. Needless to say, Anton v. Rydzewski was allotted the *Herrenbett* as his sleeping place. Schocher and I preferred to crawl into the newly pitched tent, while Barbaria and the porter contented themselves with a layer of *Alpenrosen* upon the floor of the hut—a type of couch that had been our portion dozens of times.

But let us come to our deeds, because with three guides of the " first order " one might surely look for substantial results! Unfavourable weather detained us in the small hut for two days, and not until June 29th were we able to bring off our intended reconnaissance, which of course had for its objective the north-west side of the Badile. We climbed up to the easy Piz Trubinasca (9,574 ft.) which, after traversing the Bocchetta Trubinasca, we reached comfortably in four hours from the south.

From here, at a distance of a thousand yards, the telescope afforded a clear survey of the west side and

north arête of Piz Badile in its whole length. Of course the east side of the north arête was not visible from this point. For a long time Schocher and I sat leaning against the summit slab scrutinizing the whole ridge opposite with telescope and field-glasses.

To Rydzewski's questions, addressed to Schocher, as to whether he regarded an ascent of Piz Badile by that ridge as feasible, my colleague, who may possibly have formed his own estimate of the questioner's capabilities, replied: "I think that smooth, steep ridge over there is not for us." This answer came out quite definitely, with serious looks and a vigorous shake of the head. Rydzewski did not trouble me with questions, as he had known my views for some time.

In the face of Schocher's judgment, this objective, which grinned heartlessly across at us, was no longer discussed. A silent pause ensued which I made use of for a careful inspection of the whole ice gully of the Badile couloir, which began far below us and rose up sharply to a notch to the west of the Badile. Since one item on my programme for the Bregaglia group was the passage of this couloir in connection with the scaling of the Badile west ridge, and since from our present vantage-point I came to the conclusion that an ascent of this ice gully was feasible, I approached our Rydzewski with the following proposal: "One ought to make use of Schocher's presence, to carry out the ascent of Piz Badile by the couloir and west ridge—as a worthy substitute for the risky north arête."

Schocher supported this idea vigorously, and finally Rydzewski gave his consent. Our South Tyrol comrade did not fancy the Badile couloir at all, although he would not mention the fact to our *Herr*. To me he confided that an ascent in this ice gully seemed to him

like a walk to hell, with the sole difference that it led upwards!

At 4.30 p.m. we were once more down at Sass Fura.

On the same evening, and after thorough discussion, the ascent of Piz Badile by the Badile couloir and west ridge was decided upon as our next climb. I was looking forward to it eagerly.

For such an undertaking we needed fine and settled weather, and that was unfortunately not to be had during the five days which followed. It rained incessantly; so much so, that Schocher and I had to leave our tent and seek refuge in the small hut. Our field-marshal was in a very irritable mood.

On July 2nd and 4th we got as far as the foot of the couloir, but had to retrace our steps owing to a change in the weather. Finally, on July 6th, the heavens allowed us to set out on our enterprise. It had been agreed that the Ampezzo guide with Herr v. Rydzewski should leave Sass Fura fully two hours later than we two Engadiners, in order that in the meantime Schocher and I might prepare the steps in the lower portion of the couloir.

At 4 a.m. on July 6th we two stood at the bergschrund by the mouth of the couloir. The weather was fine and the temperature very low. What disquieted us somewhat in regard to our undertaking was the strong vertical wind, which blew in gusts down the steep ice gully. After depositing our rucksacks—fatally, as it happened—in a sheltered spot, meaning to fetch them later on when our companions arrived, we set to work, undeterred by the wind. I was given the lead.

Heavy step-cutting in bare ice was ahead of us! And this was considerably hindered by the violent

gusts from above, forcing us each time to lean against the steep wall of the couloir, so as not to be torn loose from our steps.

A little before 7 a.m. Herr v. Rydzewski with Barbaria appeared below the bergschrund at the entrance to the couloir. We took counsel above as to whether we had better go down in order to help them up. And our rucksacks? Since I had no great hesitation about a descent, although we had already mounted 700 feet, and also to avoid unpleasant arguments with our *Herr* later on, I advised my colleague to descend. Schocher resisted emphatically. He would not be a party to a descent by steps now filled with ice fragments. And as to the rucksacks, they were of minor importance. I had no choice but to explain to those below that they had better go back to Sass Fura, while we would carry through the ascent to the Badile gap and so prepare the way for the next day.

Thereupon the two forms below disappeared and we resumed our cutting. The longed-for snow—we were climbing to the left of the deep avalanche gully—refused to appear. No wonder, at an incline of more than 56°. After cutting for five hours, we had a short pause, about 9 a.m. On account of the continuous spray of ice-dust from the cutting, my clothes, and even my shirt, since I always open my waistcoat when engaged on such work, were frozen stiff. The wind was cold, and we were still standing deep in the shadow of the Badile west wall.

During this halt, the question of turning back was raised once more, Schocher's refusal being more resolute than ever. "All right, my friend, in that case you had better take the lead!" Immediately he agreed to relieve me of the cutting and took his place ahead of me. Hardly half an hour after that, we dis-

covered that the rocks on our left were climbable, and steered in their direction.

The clambering which followed was not easy, but took us up much faster. Round about ten o'clock the colouring in the adjacent couloir seemed to me to indicate a layer of snow. I told my comrade, and since from where I stood the couloir could easily be reached in a few paces, I climbed across at once from the rock to the snow of the gully. There was just enough snow upon the ice for making firm steps. We made good progress upwards.

The last difficult spot, a vertical step fifteen to twenty feet high, which could not be turned and caused us twenty minutes' heavy work, was surmounted at 11.25. What now followed was not difficult, and at 12.30 p.m. we stood in the gap to the west of Piz Badile, which later received the name Colle del Badile, and may be at an altitude of about 10,200 feet.

The whole ascent had taken us eleven hours, of which the passage of the couloir accounted for eight hours forty-five minutes. Although our rucksacks lay far below by the bergschrund and we had not had a bite since 1 a.m., we rejoiced none the less in the work accomplished and took comfort in the warm sunbeams and a little chocolate which I found between ice splinters in my coat pocket. Schocher surprised me with a fine drop of "iron ration" cognac, which he always carried with him in case of emergency.

At 1 p.m. we began the descent southward. After a brief and not specially hard climb, we reached the southern Badile Glacier in twenty-five minutes, and made our way westwards below Punta Torelli, climbing up deep softened snow to the Passo Porcellizzo nord, which we reached at 2.45.

This nick in the ridge, situated between Pizzo Porcellizzo on the south and Punta Torelli on the north, forms the shortest way across from the Badile Hut to the upper Val Codera and to the Bocchetta Trubinasca.

The descent from our pass to the Codera Glacier led down through a wide, not particularly steep snow couloir. The nett drop in altitude may have been a good 1,500 feet.

At this point I must not omit to mention an incident which bordered close on catastrophe. Glancing down the snow couloir, Schocher said: "We can glissade down there easily in five to six minutes." I cautioned him earnestly against such a glissade, for the snow was too deeply softened. But my comrade laughed at my warning. Without long deliberation he seated himself in the snow and began to move off. He had hardly glissaded fifty feet when I noticed an avalanche starting behind and to the left of him! I gave a loud yell, and just in the nick of time Schocher managed in two or three bounds to reach the rocks on his right and was safe. The avalanche he had started rolled down to the bottom, and did not stop until about the middle of the little Codera Glacier; it was then fully 150 yards broad. This inexcusable thoughtlessness on the part of an older colleague astonished me very much.

With an ashy face Schocher looked up at me from the rock on which he stood and exclaimed: "This time it really was out for my blood." And I answered him: "All right, my boy, now that the track is clear, it's my turn!" seated myself and went off. Scarcely six minutes later we had both arrived safely at the Codera Glacier. Crossing it we continued over the southern slopes of Piz Trubinasca and westward to the Bocchetta Trubinasca. Evening found us again

in the little Sass Fura hut, after an absence of seventeen hours. A strenuous, but proud day!

However, the birds had flown—which, by the way, did not greatly distress us that evening. According to the testimony of the shepherd, *Herr* and guide had both descended to Promontogno in the morning after their return from the Badile couloir, having left word that they would not be back at Sass Fura before noon on the following day. We two hungry and thirsty men rested and refreshed ourselves thoroughly. I believe that on that evening we drank up every drop of goat's milk our shepherd host had in the place—according to Schocher's estimate, no less than 1⅓ gallons. Furthermore, there followed a peaceful night. Even the persistent, monotonous note of the scops owl, which at other times had pestered us dreadfully, was unable to awaken us from a deep and healthy sleep.

Early next morning we got ready to fetch our two rucksacks, up at the bergschrund of the Badile couloir. But my comrade Schocher refused to let me make the trip! He went up there alone, while I brewed for his return an exquisite cup of *café au lait*.

At midday our field-marshal appeared with Barbaria. After our detailed report about the tour of the previous day it was to be expected that he would favour a repetition, and an ascent to the summit by the Badile west ridge. But not a word about all that; so that one might have thought that no such thing existed for Anton v. Rydzewski as the Badile couloir and west ridge. All he held out to us was a walk with him in the afternoon.

On the afternoon of July 7th we stood—Herr v. Rydzewski, Schocher and I—on the crest of Sass Fura, at the upper end of the high rock wall, which dominates Alp Cengalo and the Cengalo Glacier from the

west and forms the real spur of the Badile north buttress. Right in front of us to the south-east, and separated from us only by the narrow ice tongue of the western Cengalo Glacier, there rose, erect and proud, the magnificent shapely north wall of the Cengalo. My Pontresina colleague, who had never been here before, or indeed in Val Bondasca at all, was visibly impressed by the spectacle. He gazed now at the precipices of the Cengalo, now at the massive Badile north wall, towering oppressively close, only to be attracted again by the nobler form of the Cengalo.

To me, however, this was nothing new. Since 1887 I had had opportunities annually, you might say, of seeing and studying these north faces. And for this very Cengalo and its north face I had, for the last four years, had an approximate line of ascent laid out in my mind. If this plan had not been carried out before, the fault lay with the non-fulfilment of the indispensable conditions. I regarded the huge snow corniche, which usually crowns the whole summit ridge of the Cengalo, as the chief danger of the ascent. For under the effects of temperature it breaks away, between the end of June and the middle of July, falling as a great avalanche that sweeps down the whole north face of the mountain, from the Gemelli almost to the Cengalo couloir, leaving it clean, as it were.

The spell of solemn awe which lay upon all three of us was broken by Herr v. Rydzewski—we were standing in the immediate neighbourhood of the inviting Badile north buttress—who announced in an agitated and trembling voice: "I am going to cut the Badile north buttress out of my programme; the ascent of Piz Badile by the Badile couloir and west ridge is to be postponed until June 1897, and the

attempt on the Cengalo from the north, if feasible, will be also carried out in 1897!"

At the same moment Rydzewski made a faithful promise to comrade Schocher that the Badile climb, by the couloir and west ridge, would not be undertaken without him.

On the rocky bulwark of Sass Fura in that same hour, the secret of a Cengalo ascent from the north was, in a burst of confidence, imparted to a dangerous third person, inasmuch as I initiated Schocher into all the details of the route; it was not a simple one, and I had taken great pains to study and work it out.

The postponement of the Badile ascent so carefully prepared in the couloir by Schocher and myself on the previous day, did not find favour with me. However, my representations were of no avail. If Anton v. Rydzewski had made use of the presence of Schocher and of the fine weather for this thoroughly attractive climb, he would have been spared a disagreeable surprise a year later.

After the grave revelations of Herr v. Rydzewski we descended to Sass Fura in order to prepare ourselves for a Sciora expedition direct from Sass Fura the following morning. This by way of compensation for the Badile tour which our *Herr* had disdained for this year.

Leaving the hut at daybreak on July 8th,[1] we came by the Viale on to the Cengalo Glacier. Thence, after crossing the lower Bondasca Glacier, we entered the Sciora couloir, having previously lightened our ballast by leaving the indispensable umbrella of our *Herr* and the second camera at the entrance. After half an hour's ascent we left the snow gully, turning to the

[1] Klucker elsewhere dates this Sciora expedition July 9th 1896.

right and traversing southward over the rocks of the west wall of the Ago di Sciora. After that, we clambered under difficult conditions up to the south ridge of the Ago di Sciora.

I had explored this way to the Ago di Sciora as early as 1893, with the object of opening up an ascent to this proud granite needle from the Bondasca side.

From the Ago gap, we descended to the Ago and Albigna Glaciers, using the route of the first ascent of 1893. At the foot of the Sciora di fuori, at 4.30 p.m. we parted, Rydzewski and Barbaria wandering along the Albigna Glacier and down to Vicosoprano, while Schocher and I tramped through the soft snow to the southernmost part of the Cacciabella ridge. From here we made a quick descent to the upper Sciora slopes, crossing southward to the entrance of the Sciora couloir, in order to pick up the belongings that we had deposited there in the morning. After a ramble over the Cengalo Glacier and Viale, we were back in Sass Fura a little before 8 p.m.

Three days later Schocher and I left Herr v. Rydzewski in Promontogno to take up other engagements.

VIII

Martin Schocher and Piz Cengalo by the North Face

At the beginning of June 1897, I met only the Ampezzo guide Barbaria in Promontogno. Schocher was not there! I inquired the reason and was told by Herr v. Rydzewski that Schocher's demands had been so exorbitant that he would rather do without his help. Feeling that the passage of the Badile couloir with the nervous Ampezzaner would be rather risky, I suggested to my *Herr* that Schocher might be allowed to come at least for the Badile, not to mention

the fact that he had been given a definite promise last year. But he refused curtly.

And now I should like to deal with these excessive demands of Schocher's. My later inquiries disclosed the following:

For the month of June, Martin Schocher had asked twenty-five francs a day, which was no more than his daily wage of the previous year. For the month of July, however, he had wanted fifty francs a day, seeing that through his engagement in the Bregaglia he would miss the best tours in the Bernina group. Except for the possibility of Cengalo from the north, where my condition as to the summit ridge corniche was not fulfilled until June 30th, the month of July did not come into consideration at all that year, since our ascent of the Badile by the west ridge was carried out as early as June 14th. So much for Schocher's alleged excessive demands.

Without Schocher, we three made our way on June 12th up to Sass Fura with the object of attacking Piz Badile on the 14th by its west ridge, by way of the difficult Badile couloir. After thirteen hours of arduous labour we reached the top of the Badile (10,853 ft.) at 4 p.m. on that day. I was not particularly elated by this accomplishment, because I remembered the arrangement of July 7th 1896 with Schocher. We left the top at 4.50, descended on the south side by the usual route, but did not reach the old, uninviting Badile Hut before 8 p.m. Here we spent a cold, damp night.

I must forgo any details of this climb in view of the fact that Rydzewski has devoted no less than twenty-six pages to the subject in the D. & Ö.A.V. Zeitschrift of 1898. For the tourist pure and simple his description is of no value! And he who would

wish to repeat our ascent will not be able to make out what our actual route was.

Twelve days later, when after a Disgrazia climb we returned by the Forcella di Bondo to Promontogno, I met my Pontresina colleagues, Schocher and Schnitzler, in the afternoon in front of the Hotel Bregaglia. It was pretty clear to me that. the appearance of Schocher was somehow connected with Rydzewski's breach of promise. To my question as to their plans, Schocher answered drily: "We have no further business with the Badile couloir and west ridge. From what I hear, you have attended to that without my help. So there's nothing for us but to cover old ground!" That was all I could get out of my Pontresina colleague.

On the same evening Schocher's *Herr* arrived, coming by *diligence* from Chiavenna. He was no other than the well-known mountaineer, Prince Borghese, from Rome. This upset our excitable Rydzewski completely. That evening and the next day, June 27th, with its *Föhn* and rain, were filled with anxiety for our Russian.

June 28th, the last day I could devote to Anton v. Rydzewski, was set aside for an ascent of the northern Piz Cacciabella, including a reconnaissance of the connecting ridge to Piz Frachiccio. When we arrived that evening in Promontogno by way of Vicosoprano, after a hot day of *Föhnwind*, we were told that the Italian prince had gone up to Alp Sciora with his two guides and a porter. While it was said that they might possibly attempt the Ago di Sciora from the Bondasca side, I had good reason to doubt this, for Schocher would certainly have made no secret to me of such an undertaking.

On the following morning Herr v. Rydzewski came

to my room in his dressing-gown and handed me his large telescope, requesting me before my departure to go up near Soglio high enough to be able to scour Val Bondasca with the glass for the three mysterious mountaineers. I agreed to the old fellow's wish with pleasure, and went up before breakfast to a point from which I could obtain a good view of the Bondasca group. But the result of my observation was negative, and after three hours I was back in Promontogno.

On my departure by *diligence* two hours later, I sent a farewell greeting up to my angular acquaintances, Badile and Cengalo. The former looked haughtily down, as if he would say to me: "My north buttress still stands intact!" And the other grinned scornfully, as if to remind me: "Your ascent up my broad bosom has again been left undone!" Anyhow, the defiant old fellow recognized in me alone the invader of his icy sanctity, and that was why he wanted to slay me in the Gemelli couloir with a hail of stones, on June 9th 1892.

In the hour of my departure from the Bregaglia the defiant one did not observe that three bold climbers were about to realize the project which I had conceived. Otherwise, who knows whether he would not earlier have shaken his great, loose mane!

The Badile couloir, the Cengalo with its menacing snow corniche, and my colleague Schocher with the Italian Prince, occupied my mind continually during my journey home. Again and again I thought of them, not without a contraction of the heart.

Five days later I received at La Bérarde in the Dauphiné a letter from Herr v. Rydzewski with the following terse notice:

"On June 29th—that is, on the day after your departure—Schocher and Schnitzler with the Italian Prince ascended the

Cengalo from the north! We have lost our chance, and can now strike out this objective also from our programme!"

To which was added: "On the 30th (only one day afterwards) the whole snow corniche plunged down from the Cengalo." As I laid the exasperating letter aside I couldn't help thinking "Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin! That's what you brought on yourself, old man, by your inexcusable small-mindedness."

In the autumn of 1897 Martin Schocher wrote to me:

"It was unfortunate that in the morning of June 29th I missed the point of entry to the Cengalo which you showed me last year from Sass Fura. That is, I attacked the lower stage of rock-wall too soon—that place where the great couloir opens out downwards at a point which is indicated on this wall by two parallel gullies from above. We used these two gullies alternately in our ascent, and, after a difficult climb, succeeded in getting into the regular couloir. We had lost a great deal of time over this hard lower passage, so that our ascent of the couloir, which rises obliquely toward the left, became seriously threatened by small avalanches and falling stones. By about 9 a.m. we had surmounted the most dangerous stretch, and were standing on the rock and snow rib that leads up directly to the summit ridge. Three hours later we were safely at the top of the Cengalo, having first had to dig our way through the massive snow corniche, which was no longer firmly attached.

"When we got back to Promontogno next day after climbing the Badile, by way of the Porcellizzo and Trubinasca passes, it was no little shock to hear that the whole overhanging mass on the Cengalo had fallen. In fact with our telescopes we were able to ascertain that the massive snow corniche had broken off at the spot where we had dug our passage the day before, and had disappeared, leaving a gap of 150–200 yards."

Martin Schocher had risked a great deal that day, probably more than he could well answer for! The 28th and 29th June were *föhnig* and very warm, and the snow corniche had been already dangerously soft-

ened in the early morning. The conditions which are requisite for such an undertaking were altogether absent. I must confess that on June 29th 1897, I should not have competed with any man for the conquest of the Cengalo from the north.

Since I knew Johann Martin Schocher to be straight, it was not to be assumed that the information I had imparted to him the year before upon the Sass Fura crest had moved him to embark upon this undertaking. It was more likely that Rydzewski's breach of promise demanded this expiation. However, some confidential communication might have been expected from him, and in this regard Martin Schocher remained my debtor.

IX

The Güssfeldtsattel[1]

In the year 1898, in the month of June, we turned our backs upon our beloved Bregaglia Alps, in order to have our fling in the glacier world of the more limited Bernina group. This term will be seen to have a certain justification in view of the fact that one of the expeditions which stood on our programme was closely connected with that first ascent of the Cengalo from the north.

The winter 1897–1898 had come, and correspondence with old Rydzewski had already begun. I had to prepare myself for it, since it promised to be very extensive. At first his tone was provocative and arrogant, then it grew more conciliatory, and finally even intimate.

He craved compensation for the reverse which he felt he had suffered through the snatching away of the

[1] Also called Fuorcla Tschierva-Scerscen or Porta Roseg.

"Cengalo von Norden" by Schocher. And it was in order to bring this about that he sought my support. Mindful of the saying that "the end justifies the means," and also, no doubt, embittered by the petty persecutions which I was always having to undergo, my first reaction was to snap my fingers at him and to send him a final refusal. But kindly words always found a response with me, and so it was again that winter.

The suggestion that, as a means to this retribution, I should discover some virgin climb in Schocher's own native territory, equivalent to the Cengalo from the north, struck me as rather singular. Nevertheless, and after careful consideration, I made him the following proposal: To traverse the Fuorcla Tschierva-Scerscen (also called Güssfeldtsattel) from south to north,—namely from the Upper Scerscen Glacier to the Tschierva Glacier, thus accomplishing the descent of the ice-wall. To this proposal I added, however, that I should not be carrying out this expedition from revengeful motives, but for the love of the thing and out of a natural urge for such adventures; also that for an undertaking of this kind I should have to have a first-class ice-man as partner.

My proposal met with Rydzewski's unqualified approval, even in regard to a second guide in place of Barbaria. I really wanted to make it my own business to secure a suitable colleague, but this he did not fancy.

Along with an Italian workman who was engaged in Sils Maria, I made a personal inspection at the end of May of the condition of the ice-wall leading up to the Porta Roseg (the future name for Fuorcla Tschierva-Scerscen) and of the bergschrund below. Then I got into touch with Rydzewski, who had been staying in Promontogno for the last few days, and on June 7th

my *Herr* arrived in Sils Maria. On greeting him, however, I met, instead of the experienced ice-man whom he had promised me, only the Ampezzaner. At this I began to see red, and asked for a confidential conversation with the Russian. He excused himself with the assurance that he had been unable to find a suitable man! He assured me, though, that Barbaria had promised him to do his very best on this project. With his smooth words Rydzewski succeeded after all in breaking down the resistance of the "Rhaeto-Roman," [1] and we decided to start from Sils Maria on June 9th. It was agreed that in crossing to the Marinelli Hut over the Scerscen Pass we should take Piz Tremoggia by its north-west face as a training climb.

As usual, far too much unnecessary baggage had to be dragged up to the Marinelli Hut for this undertaking. And since I refused point blank this time to act as porter, a third porter was added to the two already engaged.

In doubtful weather we set out on June 9th, six strong, through the Fextal and thence to the upper Fex Glacier. Having arrived at the foot of Piz Tremoggia I indulged in no lengthy deliberations, neither did I consult our South Tyrolese colleague, who looked rather obstinate, but sent the three porters to the Scerscen Pass with instructions to wait for us there. We turned our attention immediately to the very steep Tremoggia face which measures about 1,100 feet. Except for the lowest third of the face and as far up as the first rocks, where we encountered some difficulty, the conditions were very good. Cutting steps, we reached the north summit of the mountain in barely two hours, but immediately afterwards met a violent

[1] See S.A.C. Year Book, No. 29, page 163.

snowstorm, a surprise attack which caused no small consternation in my two companions. "This snowstorm will be the end of us," wailed the old man, and Barbaria was apparently busy with his Saints. I was not anxious about the descent to the Scerscen Pass, which incidentally is quite easy. With the help of the compass, and keeping in touch with each other by shouts, we found ourselves forty minutes later with the porters on the Scerscen Pass.

It did not take long to determine our next move. Instead of going on to the Marinelli Hut, as provided in our plan of the morning, we retreated to Fex, after depositing on the rocks by the pass the firewood and other dispensable articles which would take no harm up there. In pouring rain we reached Sils Maria in the evening. On account of bad weather there was an idle interval until June 18th.

At noon on June 19th we were once more up on the Scerscen Pass. The deep fresh snow hindered our progress towards the Marinelli Hut to such an extent that we did not reach it until 5 p.m. It was lucky that our porters had now fetched up the firewood left on the Scerscen Pass, for in the old hut, which did not provide wood to tourists, not a single stick could be found. A strong northerly wind set in during the night, and next morning snow was driving over all the peaks; we remained therefore in the hut.

June 21st brought us the longed-for good weather which was absolutely necessary for our difficult task. The porters were told to carry anything we did not need back over the Scerscen Pass to Sils Maria, and we three set out upon our arduous journey at 4.10 a.m. Before leaving the hut I stuck into my rucksack a round wooden club about sixteen inches long, which

the porters had used in the hut to stir their polenta—this as a generally useful implement for getting over the bergschrund on to the Tschierva Glacier.

Shortly after 8 a.m. we stood upon the floor of the proud balcony of the Porta Roseg (11,572 ft.), called Güssfeldtsattel by the Pontresina guides. I threw an eager glance northward over the notorious ice-wall down on to the Tschierva Glacier. But since the lowest third of the wall is considerably steeper than its upper parts, I could not get a view of the bergschrund below. Presumably, however, the changes which might have taken place since my reconnaissance from the Roseg valley could not be of such a kind as to frustrate our crossing to-day. Besides, it was for such a contingency that I was carrying that polenta stick in my rucksack.

In anticipation of what might be before us, we made an extended halt for breakfast. But our Ampezzo comrade disdained any kind of food. Pale and speechless, the big, strong man cowered upon the snow-floor of the pass, staring fixedly down over the ice-wall. In an agitated voice, and pointing to the abyss, he finally asked me: "È pericoloso?" "Nonsense, it's not dangerous, if everyone of us does his part! On the other hand, what we are going to undertake is no child's play. If it were, we shouldn't be sitting here. Still, if you think this too desperate a job, you're quite at liberty, as far as I'm concerned, to go back the way we came!"

My feelings during that hour may well be imagined. I reproached myself for having undertaken the task at all with such companions. To tackle an enterprise like this with a colleague with no energy or spirit, weak on ice and snow, and with a nervous, short-sighted tourist of 60, who would be on our hands

in the event of a difficult situation, went far beyond my principle of venturing only so much as I could see my way clear to carrying through.—But the wonderful day, the superb scenery, and especially my sense of honour and my self-confidence, absolutely dispelled my doubts.[1]

I had scarcely ever been in such good form, and on no other mountain expedition had my self-confidence been so unshakeable as on that day and in that hour. There came to me unbidden Paul Güssfeldt's words in his article "Fuorcla da Roseg," which run as follows: "When feeling and thinking beings go into enterprises which may endanger their lives, they must be sure that the ideal basis and the moral justification for their actions are not wanting."

As regards the width and incline of this ice-wall I was able to ascertain on my later ascents in the summers of 1899 and 1904, that earlier data were exaggerated. My altimeter registered from the bergschrund to the pass a maximum difference in altitude of 800 feet. The greatest width is hardly 200 feet. The mean angle of inclination may be 56°. The steepest stretch, with an angle of 69°, is to be found in the lowest third of the wall. Figures such as 1,000 feet for the height, 270 feet for the width, and inclines of 60° to 80° cannot possibly be applied to this ice-wall.

At 9 a.m. we made ready for the ticklish undertaking. My plans were in order to the last detail, and all my instructions had been given. We had at our disposal two ropes of 65 and 160 feet respectively, as well as a small hemp-rope about ¼ inch thick and

[1] Contrary to its usual custom of mentioning first the employer, then the guides, the Italian Climbers' Guide records this descent as being made by "the guide Klucker, with A. von Rydzewski and M. Barbaria."

330 feet long which was specially destined for use at the steep, lowest part of the wall for the security of the step-cutter.

A sticky crust of snow, about an inch thick, lay on the upper third of the ice-wall. Leading downwards from there to a small rock reef sticking out of the ice on the right side of the wall, ran a rather narrow rib of snow. This snowcrest increased from top to bottom, reaching by the rock a width of about one foot.

It was quite clear to me from the outset that step-cutting from the top down to the bergschrund was not to be thought of, since for that the day would have been too short, especially if the clearing of the way were left to the Ampezzaner.

Trusting to the thin crust of snow, I resolved to let my companions down one at a time as far as the length of the rope would allow. Barbaria's orders were to cut three broad, deep steps each time, which could be used as firm halting-places. Moving on in this way, two and a half lengths of rope brought us to the upper end of the slight snow rib. This stretch was one of the most disagreeable I have ever experienced in the mountains. Without any anchorage from above, down over the thin, insecure snowcrust, which moreover was mostly torn away by my companions—these were moments that brought the cold sweat out on my forehead. It is no exaggeration if I state here that I reached the beginning of the snow rib with bleeding fingertips.

The next stage of the descent, to the reef of rock, went much easier, although it called for the greatest caution and strict attention to the rope. As last man, I reached the reef at 11 a.m., and began immediately to clear it and to make two safe seats for my com-

panions. Then the 330-foot length of hemp rope was got ready. I was to be secured by it while cutting steps down to the bergschrund. And now to work, which was no easy matter, as the ice-wall from the rock spur downwards showed an inclination of nearly 70°. Step after step appeared, most of them large and deep; and in addition I cut holds for the hands. I do not know why, but I had never before cut steps for a descent with such joy as that afternoon on the ice-wall of the Porta Roseg.

At 2.15 in the afternoon, and therefore exactly three hours after leaving the rock reef where my companions sat, I stood at the upper edge of the bergschrund which was about eighteen feet above the lower edge. Thereupon my two waiting companions were brought down with the necessary caution, and got over the bergschrund in safety, one at a time. Using the polenta club embedded in the ice and a doubled rope, I too slid down over the bergschrund, and at 2.40 the three of us stood safely below the schrund on the Tschierva Glacier.

After plenty of solid refreshment—Barbaria proving himself ready to make up for what he had missed in the morning—we rambled cheerfully past the left side of Piz Humor to the lower Tschierva Glacier and the Roseg valley. As the Tschierva Hut had not been built at that time, we continued our way without further halts to the Roseg Restaurant. A wagonette took us to Pontresina and from there to Sils Maria.

In front of the Hotel Alpenrose my dear and esteemed friend, Joseph Pontz, came forward to greet me, with the words: "I know exactly what folly you have been up to to-day! Your descent over the ice-wall has been watched by telescope from the Fuorcla Surlej."

This alleged folly was duly celebrated at good Papa Barblan's (the Alpenrose) that evening. The popping audible during the festivities from time to time, did not in any way disturb the slumbers of my companions of the Porta Roseg.

On the following morning I was commanded to report to Herr v. Rydzewski. He showed me a postcard to Martin Schocher in Pontresina, which read as follows:

"In the year 1897 an Italian Prince came to Promontogno and on June 29th, with Schocher and Schnitzler, ascended the Cengalo from the north. And in the year 1898 a Russian nobleman came to the Engadine and on June 21st, with Klucker and Barbaria, traversed the Güssfeldtsattel from south to north. We are quits, Herr Schocher!"—(Signature.)

As I read, I could hardly suppress a smile, and friend Schocher had to laugh too, when he received this card.

The two main figures of the foregoing chapter are no longer in the land of the living. Both are gone, and I cannot omit the pious wish: "Peace to their ashes!"

X

Piz Badilet from the North

This double-peaked mountain—a kind of replica of Piz Badile lying eastward of it—stands in the remotest basin of the wild Vallone Trubinasca, and is known among Bregaglia inhabitants simply as "Il Badilet." It was first ascended from its southern side as early as 1893 by the Italian mountaineers, Francesco Lurani and C. Magnaghi. And since the ascent fell upon St. Anne's Day (July 26th), the Italians christened this peak "Cima Sant' Anna."

Although much good ink has already been spilt in regard to this Badilet, and although it has given rise to very unpleasant controversies, I should like to add my contribution.

During the 'nineties we had climbed most of the peaks of the frontier range of Val Bondasca either directly or indirectly from the Swiss side; so I had a special wish to attempt this Badilet from the north. On my various expeditions into Vallone Trubinasca, and most particularly whenever we traversed the Bocchetta Trubinasca, I was able each time to study the north face of the Badilet, finally gaining the conviction that an ascent might be accomplished by using part of the long narrow gully which runs up the whole north face almost as far as the west peak, and at its lower end opens out into the broad couloir.[1] The greatest difficulties were encountered within an 80- to 100-feet stretch about one-third of the way up the gully or face, where the snow couloir bends a little to the right and runs into the steep, deep-cut, chimney-like ice gully.

For the year 1899 Mansueto Barbaria was unfaithful to his *Herr*, and in his place Rydzewski had engaged another man from Ampezzo as porter and body-servant, a young fellow who had been with us before as porter. His name was Angelo Dandrea. Willing and conscientious he was, but in the mountains, and especially in precarious situations, quite useless. I learned this to my sorrow on the north face of the Badilet.

On June 11th 1899, we three, accompanied by another porter, started for Sass Fura early in the forenoon and reached the small shepherd's hut about

[1] The couloir descending from the Forcola della Punta, between Piz Badilet and Punta di Trubinasca.

midday, where we made ourselves as comfortable as possible. It was a remarkably beautiful Sunday and our chief was in a correspondingly good mood, so that he asked me to make a sketch for him of Badilet and Punta di Trubinasca. This wish I fulfilled readily and to his complete satisfaction, although I never met with any reproduction of it in Alpine periodicals.

At 3.30 a.m. we left our beloved hut and steered our course toward the Trubinasca Glacier. The second porter remained behind in the hut in order to look after our belongings.

At 6.25 we stood by the bergschrund at the foot of the Badilet–Punta di Trubinasca north wall. It was quite clear to me that the surmounting of this rock wall towering brutally above us meant a big piece of work, and that it would be for me to take over the whole thing and to see it through. To count on my colleagues for any support—even moral—was out of the question! Our South Tyrolese, who had on the previous night been flaming with ardour for this undertaking, had become remarkably silent now that he was face to face with the mighty wall and the steep couloir of approach. I feel sure, if I had then declared at the bergschrund, "we are turning back now, because the ascent is too risky," Dandrea would have been the first to welcome the retreat.

It was very painful to me that our noble *Herr* had thought it more important to have a cheap "general" than to see that I had a competent and stout-hearted comrade for our difficult expeditions. He himself had not any ideas with regard to the attack. The main thing for him was that we should get to the top. He never troubled his head as to the "where" and "how." It may be possible that he was reposing his

entire confidence of success in his guide with the "uncontrolled character."

After a short halt we moved on, Dandrea coming second in line after me and Rydzewski bringing up the rear. This order of things I always observed in the ascent, whether it were over rock, snow or ice. It was easy to cross the bergschrund, and we set to work on the couloir at once. The snow inside was good. Three or four strokes were enough to give us a large step. We gained height quickly, but the couloir grew steeper and steeper. We measured inclines of 50° and shortly afterwards of 55°. After about forty minutes' climb our ravine took a bend to the right and narrowed to a very steep ice chimney in which two ice pitches followed one after another. Here evidently lay the crux of the climb. The rocks to our right were smooth and unapproachable, and it seemed to be no better on the left. The incline within the gully at this spot is about 60°.

As I secured the man behind me at the first pitch, I noticed with some concern that he was already busy with his Saints. A pointed remark from me in the vernacular brought him to himself. Shortly afterwards we stood before the last ice pitch which was some fifteen feet high, and, as it were, overhanging. It was not to be got over by means of steps. The hour was 8.35. A glance up and down the wall of the couloir to the left told me that it could be scaled from a few feet below, so that my companions would have to descend a few steps. And after they had anchored themselves properly, I clambered about thirty feet up the left wall and happened to find a rock ledge large enough for bringing up two persons. I could also establish from this spot that to cross over above the vertical step in the chimney would be

feasible, although difficult. Other outlets to the top did not exist.

Quickly I bade my companions clamber up to me, and told our brave Ampezzaner that as soon as I had got up about twenty-five feet higher and had anchored myself against the chimney wall (on the side towards the mountain) he was to unrope our *Herr* and to fasten himself to the end of the rope. That would enable me to hold him when he clambered into the gully above the vertical step. This was done, and Dandrea with his halberd—he carried a monstrous ice-axe, a relic of bygone days, with a shaft at least four feet three inches long—set forth on his fateful venture. Slowly and tremblingly he managed to advance about fourteen feet. The next thing was to descend about seven feet, so as to reach the bed of the gully; but this he seemed unable to do. He dangled about on the rope, swaying backwards and forwards, and all prompting was in vain. Suddenly I heard a clink, and saw Dandrea's axe disappearing for evermore into the depths below. This was the signal for loud lamentations. Dandrea crept back to the rock ledge, clasped his hands, and with upturned eyes burst out: "Oh, Madonna, oh Madonna e car Signore e tutti Santi! Ajutami!"—Although I stood fuming at my anchorage above, I could not help laughing at the simple fellow. The situation grew still more acute when, through the behaviour of our Dandrea, old Herr v. Rydzewski began to lose his own control. My situation was not an enviable one. I berated the porter roundly and ordered him to unrope himself and to rope up Rydzewski instead. This was done. In a few minutes I had our chief over in the gully above the ice pitch, with the result that shortly afterwards our hero Dandrea—roped of course—stood

likewise beside our *Herr*. I need not describe how I got down and over to my companions. By 11 a.m. we had surmounted this difficult and complicated place. It had taken us 2 hours and 25 minutes to climb up a distance of hardly 160 feet.

For our further ascent we did not continue much longer in the steep gully, which from this point upwards gradually became a shallow trough. We very soon clambered up to the left on to the rim of the trough wall. About midday, at a comfortable spot, we took a long-desired and well-earned rest in the warm sunshine. At 1 p.m. we continued the ascent to the left of the gully, traversed into it once more after half an hour and found it to be well lined with snow. Cutting steps, we came at 3 p.m. to a gap in the ridge directly west of the lower summit of the mountain. Twenty minutes later we set foot upon the west peak of the Badilet (10,389 ft.). It had taken twelve hours to mount from Sass Fura to this point.

As the day was far advanced and the way back long, we gave up the highest peak which was some thirty minutes distant, and rested. Our hero Dandrea heaved a sigh of relief at his escape from the north wall which had held such terrors for him, and at seeing before him ground fit to walk on again. The colour returned to his pale face. I could not help going up and patting him on the shoulder, with the words: "Dandrea, you must tell me now, who helped us up here, the Madonna or the Almighty, or Holy St. Andrew, so that I shall know another time what to do." I am still waiting for the answer.

At 4 p.m. we left the western peak of the Badilet and descended steeply to the small Codera Glacier at the south foot of the Punta di Trubinasca. At 7 p.m. we were on the Bocchetta Trubinasca. The descent

into Vallone Trubinasca in bad conditions of snow, over moraine slopes, and with a tired elderly *Herr* took a great deal of time, so that we reached Sass Fura by lantern light as late as 10.15 p.m.

The last new climb which I undertook in the service of the Russian was that of Punta di Trubinasca, carried out on June 20th 1900, with Mansueto Barbaria as companion. Going from Sass Fura over the Bocchetta Trubinasca, we came to the nick in the ridge at the west foot of this beautiful granite pinnacle. On account of unsettled weather and mist, Rydzewski gave up the ascent and stayed below, while we two others climbed the peak. In ascending we encountered the greatest difficulty in the lowest third of the ridge, while the upper parts of the west ridge are quite easy.

It seemed to me rather singular, that later on Rydzewski wanted to christen this west ridge " Barbaria Ridge " ; all the more so as Barbaria had come second on the rope. And even more peculiar was the christening of the peak, which at that time was still unknown ; for Rydzewski accepted with pride Barbaria's grateful proposal to name the conquered peak in honour of our chief " Pizzo Rydzewski ! " Later on I pointed out to the Russian in a letter that in Switzerland we never name our peaks and passes after persons.

Our last mountain climb was Torrone Centrale (10,794 ft.), which we reached from the Forno Hut on June 24th by its north wall. This was the second ascent of the mountain. In descending we chose the southward route, to the basin between the southern slopes of the mountain and the Torrone Orientale, thereby carrying out the first traverse at the same time. From the Torrone basin we crossed eastward along

the southern foot of the Torrone Orientale as far as the south-east slope of Monte Sissone. We climbed the latter itself, a toilsome ascent, in order to descend on the Forno side by the usual route to the Forno Hut.

This long and strenuous tour was my last heroic exploit with the illustrious " pioneer " of the southern Bregaglia mountains, " Anton v. Rydzewski."

His last lines in my *Führerbuch* are from Heine:

" Vier Seiten eng und zierlich,
Ein kleines Manuskript!
Man schreibt nicht so ausführlich,
Wenn man den Abschied giebt! "

Four pages slim and tender,
A script of modest size!
One does not run to volumes,
In saying one's good-byes!

CHAPTER VII

WITH WHYMPER IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

"Christian Klucker, of Sils—a strong man who can hold me off the ground with one arm."

E. WHYMPER.

WHEN I left the Engadine on May 9th 1901, snowflakes were whirling as in mid-winter, and clouds hung dark and low in the valleys. I crossed the Julier by the first *diligence* of that year in snow reaching up to the axles. How the poor horses had to pant! The driver showed no mercy, and I felt overcome with pity. It was not a joyous departure.

In Geneva, on the forenoon of May 11th, we met together, and I will introduce my three companions at once:

The first arrival was Joseph Pollinger, from St. Niklaus, in the Valais. He was 25 years old, son of the well-known guide Alois Pollinger, and a first-rate man on rock and glacier, who spoke German, French and a little English.

Then followed Christian Kaufmann, from Grindelwald. He was 28, pleasing to look at, unmarried like myself, and as a mountaineer not inferior to Pollinger; he too spoke a little English.

The Savoyard, Joseph Bossonay, was the next to join the party. He wore short trousers and a heavy grey jacket, with buttons as big as a five-franc piece. On his head sat a grey hat, with a tremendous black-

cock feather, and his feet were thrust into boots weighing at least 9 lb. His age was 32, and he was the father of six children. Although none too strong on the mountain heights, he was all the more efficient where the food was good and plentiful. A good-natured fellow. Unfortunately, the Canadian tour proved to be in the nature of a starvation cure for the good-natured Bossonay.

I myself was the fourth guide, having already had considerable experience on rock and ice.

Thus Whymper's escort for Canada consisted of two good-Catholic "Josephs," married, and two heretical "Christians," single.

In Geneva, people soon knew more about us than we did ourselves. In the course of the afternoon we were besieged by inquisitive newspaper reporters, and the same evening we could read in print that "the four famous guides of the world-renowned mountain-climber Whymper were sojourning in the city." And on the following day we were photographed, front view and back view. The whole hullabaloo, especially in London and in Canada, was disgusting. Even to this day I have not quite got over this noisy publicity.

An express train took us by night to Paris and by day to Dieppe, whence a steamer bore us over stormy waters to Newhaven, on the English coast. We were met at the landing-stage by the chief of the expedition, Edward Whymper, and at the Royal Hotel, London, we were given fine rooms and good food. The intention was to start from Liverpool on May 16th. Then came the news that the ship had been run into in the harbour and seriously damaged; hence a further eight days in London, during which we went about and saw the great city. Several times, in the evening,



Andreossi

WHYMPER'S GUIDES

C Kaufmann, J. Pollinger, C. Klucker and J Bossonay



J. Gaberell, Thalwil

"THE GREY TWINS"

With the black horizontal line Klucker has marked his highest point in 1892. The great slab above was climbed by Herr Zurcher and Risch in 1923

we enjoyed the hospitality of well-known English mountaineers.

On May 23rd, about 6 p.m., we left for Liverpool with fifty-four pieces of baggage. Skirting the north coast of Ireland, we reached the open ocean in fair weather and calm seas. When skies were favourable, we four guides sat or strolled about on the deck, and watched the sea-gulls circling round our ship. In wet weather, we stayed in our quarters or in the smoking-room. In the evenings, concerts were given in the second-class dining-room. As it was now known that there were Swiss guides on board, we were cordially invited to sweeten the concerts with yodelling and Alpine songs! Pollinger and Kaufmann excused themselves immediately as non-singers, pushing Bossonay and myself maliciously to the front. I let myself be persuaded to give two romantic songs, "Ma bella val, mi Engiadina," and, "Il leger Viandannt." As there was something wrong with the accompaniment, my tenor sounded lonely, and owing to an empty stomach, rather uncertain. An English clergyman, thin as a lath, came up to me and asked for the text of the songs. For what purpose is still unknown to me.

Without seeing the promised icebergs, we entered the mouth of the St. Lawrence river on May 31st, reaching Montreal on the evening of June 2nd. We were in Canada.

Montreal is no Paris, any more than the Rocky Mountains are like our Alps. We now knew that Mr. Whymper undertook the expedition directly or indirectly at the request of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. As its headquarters were in Montreal, our leader had his hands full until everything was in

good order. We were joined by a young man named Francklyn,[1] from Halifax, who came in the capacity of photographer and was a keen hunter and an expert on birds.

On June 5th 1901, we left by train and arrived in four days at Banff, in Alberta. The Canadian Pacific Railway owns most of the hotels on the line, as well as large ironworks, machine factories, sawmills, potteries, glass-works and numerous steamers on the Canadian Lakes. The thousands upon thousands of sleepers required every year are easily obtained, as there is no end of timber in the gigantic woods of the north and of British Columbia. The security of the sleepers often leaves a good deal to be desired. Over great stretches of prairie the tracks are laid on a bottom of sand. In the mountains, I hardly ever saw the permanent way protected against falling stones, avalanches or landslides. The bridges are mostly of wood, even viaducts of 700 feet length.

In Ontario I saw beautifully cultivated land. Then followed a vast high plateau with sparse forest and bare, polished rock-faces. In my opinion, these polished rock-faces have their origin in a prehistoric glacier movement, as remains of moraines lay in the troughs, and isolated boulders on the rocky hills. Later I also observed glacier polish between Fort William and Manitoba. And then we crossed the prairie—an endless, treeless plain with few cattle and hardly any wild animals.

Early on June 9th the Rocky range came into view near Canmore. To right and left, bare grey walls with rubble slopes, precipitous chasms and avalanche tracks. The forest in the valley and on the slopes

[1] Francklyn—a great-grandson of Sir Samuel Cunard. (E. W.)

had been destroyed by fire for miles around. A desolate picture! It was also snowing. We were glad to alight in the small town of Banff, in the Bow Valley, and to warm ourselves at the open fire in the Fountain Hotel. At last we had reached the Rocky Mountains. Now the climbing could begin. I was quite wild with joy at the thought.

As the mountains near Banff have no glaciers and are not even 10,000 feet high, the place is of little importance as a climbing centre. The strong hot sulphur springs attract many visitors in the summer.

We stayed there until June 18th, because all kinds of preparations had to be made: stores had to be packed, tents examined, barometers tested, etc. We went fishing for a whole day in the Bow River. On one occasion I discovered an osprey's nest. We shot two magnificent birds. At some risk to life and limb I climbed up to the nest and fetched the young nestling down alive.[1]

In two separate parties we ascended three neighbouring mountains without our chief: Mt. Rundle, Cascade Mountain and a rock peak of the Sawback range.

Now surely we were to start! For the carrying of our stores, tents, etc., we needed eleven horses. Whymper had previously spoken of a column of porters, which, however, did not materialize. We had to do bitter penance for this, as four men equipped with axes and picks could have rendered us invaluable service in the impenetrable forests. What was the use there of two grooms on horseback? Our badly

[1] The two parent birds measured over six feet from tip to tip of wing; they were shot by Whymper's orders, and the baby sent to the aviary at Vancouver—"a domestic tragedy." (Outram.)

arranged expedition lacked mobility. The excuse was that in Canada no one did porter service.

Regardless of Whymper's previous assurances that we guides, and especially I as head guide, would, even in passing through valleys, have little to carry, we were nevertheless packed with far too heavy burdens, both in valleys and on mountains. My three colleagues carried all the more sensitive instruments, of which a theodolite alone, without stand, weighed 35 lb. My back was weighed down with two monstrous mercury barometers. These cumbersome and sensitive instruments, three feet in length, were each packed separately in leather tube and tin box, and weighed over 25 lb. The carrying of these objects was extremely uncomfortable, especially when passing through undergrowth and forest, as they had always to be kept in an upright position.

Our pack-horses carried the following: 3 tents with reserve canvas, 6 sleeping bags, 6 blankets, 1 eiderdown for Mr. Whymper, small sacks of potatoes, flour, beans, bacon, cheese, dried fruit, 3–6 tins of preserved meat from Chicago, biscuits, tea, coffee, sugar, condensed milk, candles, changes of underwear, extra shoes, 3 rifles, 2 small shotguns, picks, axes, cooking utensils, and more besides.

Whymper wore thin, light-coloured flannel trousers, light jacket and waistcoat, and on his head a beaver cap without a peak. This wonderful cap he could turn about as he liked, so that either the black-leather side faced inwards and the dark-brown hairy side outwards or vice versa, according to temperature and weather. It even had ear-flaps. An original headgear for long tramps through the snow in fair, hot weather!

I should like to tell a long tale of our deeds in the

mountains of Canada, but unfortunately I had missed my reckoning. Our expectations were far from being fulfilled. The whole enterprise remained a riddle, so far as we four guides were concerned. Our proposals were never carried out, but were rejected from the start. It became gradually apparent to us that Whymper was merely there by way of propaganda for the Canadian Pacific Railway, because we were never more than two good days' march from the railway line.

My eager wish to push forward and ascend Mt. Assiniboine—a magnificent mountain 11,870 feet high, standing to the south of the Bow Valley—was not considered. We likewise advised an attack on the 13,000-feet peaks, Mt. Columbia and Mt. Robson,[1] which towered north-west of the Wapta group. In vain; the reply was: "I have no orders to do that."

A great pity indeed, for with men of the stamp of Christian Kaufmann and Joseph Pollinger, Whymper might, with proper management, have brought off something worth while. All the more so, since our two mounted guides were perfectly familiar with the different valleys for miles around; in fact one of them had been for some time with Indians, attending to the transportation of their belongings and spoils of the chase.

Our first real undertaking was Mt. Ball. It is a beautiful mountain, 10,865 feet high, in the range between Bow Valley on the east and Vermilion Valley on the west. We had heard of two former attempts to ascend it from the north or north-west, and advised Whymper to approach it from the east side, direct from the Bow Valley. He declined, and we set out,

[1] Mt. Columbia is 12,294 feet and Mt. Robson 12,972 feet high.

bag and baggage, for the valley of the Vermilion, our first tent being pitched near the Bow River.

On the following morning, we crossed the river on horseback, but got wet feet nevertheless. Then we ascended with difficulty through forest and undergrowth in a north-westerly direction, crossed the Vermilion Pass, and by evening reached a deserted Indian camp in the upper Vermilion Valley, where we prepared for a few days' halt.

The two ensuing days were occupied in blazing a trail through the almost impassable primeval forest. This " path " had led us into a wild upland glen to the north of Mt. Ball. As, however, it proved to be very difficult and not without danger for the horses, and it seemed inadvisable on their account to stop amongst the snowfields above, we decided to leave the tents where they were. For three days the weather was very bad. Snow fell as far down as our camp, and on June 24th it lay a foot deep.

A reconnoitring expedition led us through deep fresh snow to a glacier pass at the head of this high glen. Here we saw plainly that Mt. Ball was not to be attacked from this quarter. Deep ravines and a glacier pass, inaccessible from the spot where we stood, separated us from the mountain. The trip was finally abandoned.

Instead of that, we ascended on June 26th two peaks of the Vermilion group; let us call the higher one Mt. Pollinger.[1] During this expedition we found to our regret that Whymper's ability was not of a high order. His sense of direction was likewise indifferent. I must confess, we were astounded that a man who had been climbing mountains for so long should not be

[1] Probably the present Storm Mt. It is, of course, not the Mt. Pollinger in the Yoho Valley.

able to tell even approximately the four points of the compass without the help of an instrument. And yet we had to drag about theodolite and barometer. It became at once clear to us that without a fixed point and without basis Whymper's measurements would be of doubtful value.

As our supplies were getting low, we returned to Vermilion Pass on June 29th, turned northward through an abominable forest, and under the expert leadership of our horsemen, Peyto and Sinclair, we reached a lake where trout were plentiful and furnished us with a delicious supper.

Whymper wanted to go to Lake Louise by way of the west slopes of the Bow Valley. On June 30th, therefore, we went reconnoitring. The trail would have led across a pass [1] northward to Moraine Lake in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, from there round the east slopes of beautiful Mt. Temple into Paradise Valley and finally along the foot of Saddle Mt. to Lake Louise. But on the pass the winter snow still lay deep—for heavily laden horses impassable. We had to take the shortest way back to the Bow Valley. After much trouble we reached the Bow River on July 2nd and crossed it, arriving at the railway line near the small signalman's box at Eldon; and thence to Laggan station. On the same evening we went up to Lake Louise.

The small hotel there was owned by the Railway Company and was connected with Laggan Station by a primitive roadway. The country is pretty. It is only unfortunate that cultivated land and public pleasure grounds are lacking around the lake. The latter almost fills the basin of the small valley, having a length of about 1,100 yards and a width of 330 yards,

[1] This would have been by way of Wenkchemna Pass.

being fed by the outflow from the neighbouring Victoria Glacier. Beautiful mountain forms make the background of the valley—Whyte, Victoria, Lefroy, Mitre, Aberdeen, etc.—ranging from 10 to 11,000 feet in height.

On July 3rd Whymper left for Banff, and on the following day he sent word from Banff that one of my colleagues should join him at once to help him in the packing of provisions, etc., since he was considering the transfer of the main base from Banff to Field. The lot fell upon Pollinger.

Meanwhile the rest of us explored the approaches to Paradise Valley, the ascent to Mt. Niblock, and crossed the Whyte Pass.[1] At the same time, we hunted marmots and porcupines, or killed mosquitoes, of which Lake Louise has swarms of a particularly large and bloodthirsty variety.

On July 6th our chief returned with Pollinger. The idea now was to reach as high a vantage-point as possible from which we might gain a good and extensive view over the neighbouring side-valleys. We selected Mt. Niblock, which is 9,764 feet high. From the small blockhouse on Lake Agnes we proceeded to the southern ridge of the mountain, where we prepared a place for our camp. For the first night Kaufmann stayed with Whymper, while Pollinger, Bossonay and I descended to Lake Louise. On the following morning we dragged provisions, wood and instruments up to the camping ground, and on the same day Kaufmann, Pollinger and I ascended Mt. Whyte. For the following night Bossonay stayed with Whymper, the rest of us descending once more. On July 10th we climbed up again with fresh plates for photographs, which, by the way, all turned out

[1] Between Mts. Whyte and Niblock.

failures. As the weather grew worse, tent and blankets were rolled up and left for a later visit. Thereupon we all descended.

On July 11th, Whymper had to go to Banff again, and the four of us went on another exploration. The next day, Kaufmann, Pollinger and I climbed Mt. Aberdeen; on July 13th, the other two conquered the difficult Mitre,[1] while Bossonay and I went to the top of Mt. Niblock—not an easy climb.

Meanwhile our chief had returned from Banff, and our next objective was Mt. Lefroy (11,230 ft.). On the whole, the ascent is not difficult, but the part from Victoria Glacier to Abbot Pass is very dangerous on account of threatening ice avalanches from the north side of Mt. Victoria.

On July 17th, the remainder of the camp was carried down into the valley, and on the 18th we took the train from Laggan to Field. The railway reaches the highest point at Kicking Horse Pass (5,320 ft.). Here is also the frontier between Alberta and British Columbia. Thence the railway descends quickly towards the west. At that time, Field was a small place with railway station and hotel. We arrived at midnight.

From Field, Whymper wanted to explore the President and Goodsir groups. We stayed for a week in this region, and began by exploring the neighbouring valleys in quest of minerals—but not gold—and fossils, of which very fine specimens are to be found about Mt. Stephen close by. For days we went here and there more or less aimlessly, forcing our way

[1] Outram states that all four guides ascended Mitre. Klucker should be correct. Whymper says that only two guides were on the peak.

through thick forest and undergrowth, often in pouring rain and wet to the skin.

On July 23rd an English clergyman, James Outram, joined us for a greater undertaking in the neighbourhood of the remarkable Yoho Valley. He was a delightful fellow and an excellent climber. He had been for some time in the Rocky Mountains, and with the Bernese guides Christian Häsler and Christian Bohren had done several of the better climbs. Now that he was to join us, young Francklyn remained behind for photography and small-game hunting.

On July 25th we left Field, marched northward into the Emerald Valley, and from the lake there ascended to the wooded Yoho Pass at a level of 6,030 feet, where Peyto and Sinclair were waiting for us with the horse column. The pass forms the most comfortable approach from Field to the Yoho Valley and its glacier mountains. For the present, we decided not to descend right to the bottom of the valley, but to make our way high up along the west slopes into the Little Yoho Valley and get as close as possible to Mt. President, Isolated Peak, and Mt. Habel (now Mt. des Poilus, renamed during the war).

Through difficult forest and undergrowth across ravines, gullies and moraines, we followed a trail for three days and encamped in the furthest Little Yoho Valley for sixteen days. Without any difficulties worth mentioning we reached several mountain tops, such as the highest and most beautiful summits of the President group, three nameless peaks behind the valley, one of which was proud Signal 18,[1] also the bold Isolated Peak to the north.

Unfortunately I was not always there, since as Whymper's personal guide I was otherwise occupied.

[1] Mt. McArthur—Signal 18 (Survey).

Twice I had to accompany him all the way back over the passes to Field. On August 3rd, we two crossed the Emerald Pass. In descending to the Lake I had my hands full getting Whymper down into the valley with a whole skin. On August 5th we were once more up in the camp. Mr. T. Wilson, an official of the Canadian Pacific, also came with us. On August 8th we three crossed the Kiwetinok Pass and roamed through the trackless Amiskwi River Valley from one end to the other. The next day we had broken camp by 2.30 and that evening at 10.20 we landed in Field.

Meanwhile chef Bossonay had been taken ill in camp. He was suffering much from homesickness, and was, by the way, yearning after the flesh-pots of Field. Poor Bossonay! When we met him on horseback near Yoho Lake, I found his proud black-cock feather drooping visibly.

Before we said good-bye to our quiet Little Yoho Valley, we succeeded in climbing Mt. des Poilus (previously Mt. Habel, 10,371 ft.), north-west of the great Habel Glacier. It has been alleged that its name was derived from its first climber. This is not correct! At the end of August we met in Field the German Habel himself, who told us that he had never ascended Mt. Habel, and that in former years he had travelled extensively in British Columbia.

To carry out the ascent, we had first to cross the mountain ridge which separates the Little Yoho Valley from the Habel Glacier, and to descend to the Habel Glacier beyond, crossing its upper portion as far as the eastern foot of Mt. des Poilus. We attacked the east wall straightway, and only the last part brought us to the southern ridge. Apart from a small wall of ice above the bergschrund, Mt. des Poilus is an easy

matter. The descent back into camp was made by the same route.

Seeing that it was impossible to descend direct from the Little Yoho Valley into the main valley of the Yoho River owing to primeval forest and precipices, we went on August 16th to Yoho Lake, descending from there into the valley in an easterly direction. The ravine itself is not beautiful. Dark and narrow, it mounts up to the Yoho Glacier. But the waterfalls that fling their spray on the left side and the right are magnificent, especially that coming from the Daly Glacier, which drops into the valley over a vertical cliff 400 feet high. We spent the night opposite this marvel of nature.

On August 17th we turned towards the valley and camped in the loveliest pinewood, about twenty minutes from the Yoho Glacier. Two days later we set foot upon the beautiful snow crown of Mt. Collie (10,325 ft.), following the easy eastern route. The mountain gets its name from the mountaineer Collie, who had made a vain attempt upon it by the north-east ridge.

On August 21st we three guides started off with James Outram, and conquered beautiful Mt. Balfour to the east. It rewarded us with a good view of the sources of the Bow River. And in concluding our climbs amongst this group, we climbed the rather difficult rocky peak of the Trolltinder, to the west of Balfour. In the upper part we had to exercise much patience and labour in getting Mr. Whymper up to the highest pinnacle.

On August 24th we left the Yoho Valley. Outram, Kaufmann and Pollinger crossed the Balfour Pass, reached the upper Bow Valley and pushed on to Laggan, whence they returned to Field by train. Our

chief, Bossonay, myself, and the horse column came to the same place via Yoho Lake. We had had three weeks of fair weather.

Starting from Field on August 26th, Outram and I[1] traversed in one lap from west to east the highest peak of the Cathedral range between Mts. Stephen and Victoria; went on to Hector, and rode back to Field on an engine. The keenest of pleasures, to have gone on a long expedition with a man like him!

On August 28th, preparations were made for the last short expedition, which however came to nothing. Our aim was to visit the Ice River group, called also the Goodsir group, lying to the south-west. Very respectable peaks surround the wilderness of the Ice River Valley, such as Chancellor Peak and Mt. Vaux in the west, the Ottertail Peak[2] in the north, and the two proud rock pyramids of Goodsir in the east. Whymper's inclination was toward the last-named.

On August 29th we set out with six horses for Leanchoil station. We encamped to the south of it, where the Kicking Horse River makes a sharp bend northward, after receiving the Beaverfoot River from the south. On the following day we crossed the river, marched up the Beaverfoot Valley and camped at the mouth of the Ice River Valley. It was not till the third day that the peaks of the Goodsir came into view. We and the horsemen had all we could do to convince Whymper that we had really reached the west foot of the Goodsir.

On September 1st, Kaufmann, Pollinger and I went scouting. We marked the approach to the mountain through the forest and fixed on a possible route to the summit. Next day we pitched tents high up by the

[1] Outram states that Bossonay was with them.

[2] Possibly Hanbury Peak; identity doubtful.

last pine trees at the south foot of our mountain. Unluckily, the weather changed during the night, and on September 3rd it began to snow. Therefore we left the bivouac and descended to our camp. As the weather did not improve, and as return to Europe was due to begin on September 7th, we abandoned the ascent of the Goodsir and on September 6th quietly returned to Field. Kaufmann, Pollinger and I should have loved to climb the Goodsir. But it was not to be; and I doubt, too, whether we should have succeeded in getting our *Herr* up, beaver cap and all.

Thus ended Whymper's expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1901—to my mind fruitless. Who was to blame? It may be that Edward Whymper was handicapped through his agreement with the Canadian Pacific. But I can hardly think so. Why did he need four guides for several months? And why did he so curb our spirit of enterprise? In the same length of time we could have accomplished much more.[1] When I travelled to London, my confidence had been great in the first conqueror of the Matterhorn. But he who came was not the Whymper of 1865; he was 60 years old, and not every climber is still capable at that age.

Yet I had seen and experienced much that was new. For my part, I am certain that the extensive mountain range is not nearly so rich in beauty as our Alps. Sharp and individual formations are less frequent. In Alberta, at least, there are no high mountains. Our measurements showed that for peaks whose

[1] "My greatest feat," remarked Klucker with sarcasm to Walter Risch, "was to climb a tree in the primeval forest, to see where on earth we were" (*Die Alpen*, 1929). Josef Pollinger states that they made twenty-two ascents in all.

height had formerly been given as 13,000 feet and over, a deduction of from 1,500 to 2,500 feet must be allowed. The population is very sparse throughout the mountain region. For weeks we did not meet a living soul in its valleys, nor were roads or good paths to be found there. A few Indian trails constitute the connection between valleys, and these are often so overgrown, or so obstructed by fallen tree-trunks, that it is impossible to get through at all without axe and knife.

Great virgin forests and rapid rivers are an extraordinary hindrance to the mountaineer and explorer. There were no mountain pastures, still less meadows to be seen in these parts; only forest and undergrowth, lakes and marshes, slopes of débris, rocks and snow. Even in the vicinity of human habitation along the railway line I never saw as much as five acres of cultivated land in one piece. The flora is very poor and confined to a few species. The yellow anemone I often saw, and here and there a few rampions and saxifrages. Singularly beautiful is the white flower of the rhododendron. The forest is made up of pines and firs. Foliage trees are rare, consisting mostly of birch and poplar, everything else being undergrowth.

Song birds were seldom to be heard. Marsh and swimming birds abounded. Eagles, hawks and vultures I saw almost every day, likewise the track of the black bear. There are said to be lynxes and wildcats, too. Foxes, badgers, martens, beavers, otters, and especially porcupines were plentiful. Up in the mountains I espied occasional wild mountain goats, which however have nothing in common with our chamois. The porcupines are extremely troublesome rodents, and did not leave us in peace even in camp.

Kaufmann and Mr. Outram met one during an ascent in the Little Yoho Valley region at a height of nearly 10,000 feet. Endeavouring to wend its solitary way over a crevasse, it tumbled in and perished miserably.

Buffalo, elk, gazelles, and wild sheep have long since been driven away from the parts we visited. What one does not read about in the travel books and advertising leaflets are the very delightful winged and long-legged mosquitoes. They leave one no peace or rest in July, nor even in August. Day and night they tormented us. No London Agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway can sing that away!

On the 8th of September, a wet day, we left Field somewhat out of humour, and reached Montreal after travelling four days and nights. Thence the train took us in 13½ hours to New York. As I looked at the skyscrapers, there came to my thought my little marmot's home in the Fextal, and homesickness began to stir. The German steamer, *Lahn*, landed us at Southampton. In Paris I parted company with my three comrades, who travelled home via Dijon. On September 29th I saw once more the blue lakes of my Engadine, and that evening I opened the door of my house. The Fextal wore the red and yellow colours of autumn, and up in the mountains winter was making ready its white robe.

CHAPTER VIII

WITH THE ADVANCING YEARS

WITH the summer of 1905 my larger expeditions came to a sudden standstill. Owing to a very distressing skin trouble which affected my face, I was obliged to cancel my engagement with Mrs. R. Thomson in Zermatt on August 11th and journey home with a heavy heart.

The doctors were not in agreement as to my condition. All kinds of remedies were applied. I even had to swallow arsenic in a diluted form. And I came to the conclusion that even reputed specialists in dermatology did not know what I was suffering from.

The ultra-violet rays were very injurious to my skin when the sun was high, especially during fresh snow from April to September. In the winter months the trouble disappeared completely, but recurred regularly in the spring.

In 1917 and 1918 a curious change took place in my condition, when numerous abscesses began to form. That was my deliverance. But it is obvious that my activities as guide were for a long time practically at a standstill. I had to decline all larger offers, however tempting. Words fail me to describe the spiritual sufferings of those years. Only the silent Fex valley heard my sighs.

The few climbs which I was able to undertake from 1906 to 1917 had, with trifling exceptions, to be postponed until the autumn. I confined myself, furthermore, to the mountains near Fex and in the Bregaglia

district. With Dr. Karl Täuber, Jean Fritsch and two gentlemen from Zürich I set out for Promontogno on August 6th 1906. I can be quite brief in regard to this *Wanderung*.[1]

Favoured by the weather, we carried out the following ascents: Traverse from Val Bondasca to Val Porcellizzo by the Forcella di Bondo to the Badile Hut. On the second day we climbed Piz Badile by the usual route, descending to Bagni del Masino. On August 10th, from the Capanna Cecilia by the Via Baroni (the rock route), we reached the proud pinnacle of the Disgrazia in five hours, although we were all five on the same rope! We returned to the Preda Rossa Glacier, wandered over Passo di Corna Rossa into the Torreggio valley and to Chiesa, in the Val Malenco.

As one member of our party had to leave us and return home, the remaining four went up to the Marinelli Hut near the Scerscen Glacier. On the 13th, we paid homage to Piz Bernina by way of the south ridge, returning to the same hut by the east ridge. In conclusion, two of us scaled Piz Palü from the Fuorcla Bellavista, walking from there to Pontresina by the Fortezza and the Diavolezza Pass.

This superb *Wanderung* did my heart good. Physically, I endured it with comparative ease, neither did my skin disease grow any worse. My comment that the five of us were on one rope applies likewise to the Badile ascent. It was contrary to the rule, that while actually climbing not more than three should be on the same rope. However, this procedure on Badile and Disgrazia was not from my choice. Since neither of the two capable gentlemen in my party of four was

[1] I refer the reader to the 42nd volume of the S.A.C. Year Book, 1907.

willing to lead on the required second rope, I had no alternative but to tie them all on one. On glaciers and snow-fields it is quite permissible for four or five to go on one rope; on rock, however, never more than three! This has been established by long experience.

At the end of the month I rambled once more into Val Bondasca, this time for the opening of the new Sciora Hut. The celebration on August 27th was sadly clouded by the tragic death of the porter, Umberto Milesi. In the company of a local resident, he had chosen a wrong passage for their descent on the west side of the Cacciabella ridge and had fallen to his death. I was commissioned with the help of eight men to recover the body. And a very sad and wearisome task it was to carry the remains of the heavy, stalwart man over the highest slopes of the Cacciabella and through the chimney. On the same evening came the welcome surprise of my nomination as honorary member of the Bregaglia Section of the S.A.C.

In September of the same year I accompanied my friend Professor Dr. Curtius twice to the Forno Hut, and made with him the ever-rewarding ascent of Monte del Forno. And a few days later we carried out together a picturesque circular tour: Promontogno–Sciora Hut–Cengalo Glacier–Viale–Sass Fura–Promontogno. The passage from the Sciora Hut over the Cengalo Glacier to the Viale is far from simple. The small but awkward glacier and its three treacherous moraines offer anything but an agreeable *Wanderung*.

From 1908 until the beginning of the Great War I had during the summer months a pleasant and at the same time profitable occupation. That was the laying out of the Alpine garden near Sils Maria, which was carried out under the direction of our worthy Federal

Chief Inspector of Forests, Dr. Johann Coaz, who on September 13th 1850, with the guides Jon and Lorenz Tscharner, had been the first conqueror of Piz Bernina.

However, the idea of creating an "Alpinum" up here, originated with an old summer resident of Sils Maria, the plant lover v. Gwinner of Berlin, who made a donation of several thousand francs for this purpose. Later, I was also entrusted with the supervision and care of the Alpine garden. This small preserve for Alpine flowers lay close to my heart, as it brought me into nearer relationship with our wonderful mountain flora. Of course I often had to contend with the lack of understanding on the part of the native population.

Unfortunately, the unhappy World War was among other things the doom of our Alpine garden. It was used as a parade ground for the army. The funds for a restoration of the garden were exhausted, and the *Kurverein*, which should have been responsible for its maintenance and supervision, was not in a position to take any action owing to the very small amount of tourist traffic. Thus, in 1915, with a heavy heart, I had to give up this work, to which I had become so much attached. What a pity that this beautiful and worthy project should have come to such an end!

The lovely *Aquilegia alpina*, which had been almost completely exterminated in our region, was flourishing vigorously in our garden. I planted seed from it in several other places—so that natives and guests might tear it out again by the roots! Other species, which had done well—such as *Armeria alpina*, *Cortusa Matthioli*, *Sempervivum Wulfeni*, *Dianthus glacialis*, *Horminium pyrenaicum*—all perished and disappeared.

In October 1909, I worked as instructor in a course for guides at Davos.

The instruction course in Davos disclosed the fact, by the way, that aspirants are admitted far too hastily.

The remark of one student who had failed was touching. A thoroughly good fellow from Tyrol, who had formerly acted as ice-cave and Morteratsch Glacier guide. After he had been told in no uncertain terms that he lacked the qualities requisite for a professional guide, he said: "Leave me my Mortirotsch Glacier and the Diavoletta, and I shall be quite satisfied. No Piz Bernina and Cressigüzza for me, anyway!"

In the summer of 1910 I dared not undertake any mountain climbs. Only in the autumn did I have the pleasure of making a few climbs with some acquaintances.

In the Forno Hut I met my dear friend Karl Steiner.[1] With his comrade R. Lejeune he had been clambering over the west ridge of Punta Rasica and had got close to the summit rocks.

Twenty-three men in one small room! And lively goings-on, perhaps a little too lively.

On the blazing morning of October 1st our party of eighteen men moved on at a moderate pace over the glacier toward the Cima di Castello. While four groups chose the usual way to the saddle on the north ridge and over the northern arête, two other groups started up the east face of the mountain in order to reach the top by the band which crosses the face high up. Much fresh snow lay on the band, and it became impassable. The two groups were therefore obliged to make the difficult climb up the east face to the north arête. The last slabby place under the summit

[1] On August 2nd 1918, at 5.20 p.m., Karl Steiner and Andreas Michel were killed by lightning on the connecting ridge, Scerscen-Bernina.

was very troublesome owing to fresh snow, especially for the novices!

But the sky was bright and far-away summits beckoned. What a marvellous hour it was upon the snow dome of the Castello, in pleasant lively company. I was surprised that not one of the eighteen members of the party was so tired that he could not do justice to the contents of his rucksack. That was surely the result of having ascended at a reasonable pace.

For the descent into the Albigna valley we chose the northern Castello Glacier.

Early in the morning of September 3rd 1911, Dr. Piet Barblan, Professor Grand from Chur, and myself, left the Marinelli Hut and wandered to the Upper Scerscen Glacier, crossing it in a northerly direction to the southern foot of the Crast' Agüzza. The entry upon the wall is effected by a steep snow or ice couloir which rises up to the left for 200 or 250 feet. I should never dare to enter this awful gully at an advanced hour of the day. A nasty bergschrund in the lower half of the couloir gave us plenty to do before we stood upon its upper rim. We reached comparatively quickly the upper end of the gully, turning from there to the right over slabby rocks. Two-thirds of the way up the rocks we left the route which Farrar and I had covered in 1893, when we made our new ascent of the Crast' Agüzza by the south-west wall, and steered leftward toward the adjacent west ridge of the mountain.

In answer to Grand's question why I was leaving the couloir, I explained: "The temperature is now 2–3° below zero; up above, the sun is already there, and we shall at once have 4–6° above zero, and that's just the moment for stone-fall." And rightly; for we had hardly been climbing a quarter of an hour in the left

couloir, when a colossal mass of rock broke loose barely 100 feet away on our right and crashed into the depths below. The whole mountain shook. An immense cloud of dust rose. In fear Grand cried: "Good Heavens! Had we continued over there, we should all three have perished miserably!" [1]

After the first shock had passed we continued on our way and struck the west ridge about 230 feet below the top. From this point the mighty forms of Piz Bernina, the sombre Scerscen and the beautiful Piz Roseg present an imposing spectacle.

A column of seventeen climbers from Chur was already moving down from the summit, having ascended by the east ridge. Their guide, Christian Zippert,[2] waited for us a few feet below the summit. It was a pleasure to meet up there the dear friend and comrade with whom I had carried out many a difficult and delightful climb, and whom I had not seen since my reluctant departure from Zermatt on August 11th 1905. In the forty-eight years of my profession as guide I have never met with a more efficient companion on ice and rock. From the saddle below, we went on together down into lovely Boval, and at 10.30 that evening, well content, I entered my home in the Fextal.

On August 4th 1912, I ventured upon the summit of Piz Corvatsch. That day my epidermis was immune from the attack of the sun's rays, evidently because I

[1] Professor Grand writes to Dr. Jenuy: "Thanks to Klucker's acute powers of observation and his careful guiding, we escaped certain death."

[2] Mrs. Roberts Thomson, with whom Klucker had carried out many climbs during 1902, 1904 and 1905, writes: "He and Zippert were just like brothers; they understood each other perfectly, and there was never any hesitation in finding the way, nor did I have a moment's anxiety in climbing with them."

was having the pleasure of conducting two young and charming ladies from Zürich upon the mountain. During the descent over the lower Corvatsch Glacier I was eagerly invited to undertake the office of umpire for the summer ski-ing competitions of the St. Moritz Ski Club Alpina, which were just then in progress.

Eighteen days later I conducted Prince Max von Baden and my old friend Professor Dr. Wilhelm Paulcke and his wife, up Piz la Margna. The ascent was carried out by the east ridge, seldom visited. The deep fresh snow in the upper regions and the strong sunlight irritated my skin very considerably, so that I got home with a face absolutely scorched.

In September I had the pleasure of accompanying the Chief Director of Huts of the Central Council of the S.A.C., Emanuel Meisser, on his tour of inspection in the Valais mountains. Although the weather was not always gracious, we were able, in the lower Valais, to visit all the Club-huts (cabanes) on the left bank of the Rhône Valley—ten in number.

From Zinal in the Val d'Anniviers we mounted up to the Constantia Hut on the Mountet. Rain and blizzard, which we had to contend with at times throughout our ascent, annoyed us far less than the sight of a small mountain hotel which had been built a few years ago at a distance of hardly ten minutes' walk from the hut in mocking disregard of the endeavours of the S.A.C., which would rather keep the higher altitudes free from these excrescences of civilization.

From Bourg St. Pierre in the Val d'Entremont we went with the hut guardian, Jules Ballay, to the Valsorey Cabane. On the way we met his brother who was off hunting, armed with a *Vetterli* gun. When it was pointed out that this type of weapon was

contrary to regulations, he coolly replied : " Only one bullet comes out of my gun-barrel at a time ! "

In Bourg St. Pierre we spent a few pleasant hours inspecting the Alpine garden " Linnaea," laid out near the village. What I did not much like was that it included some exotic plants. The grounds, however, are neat and well looked after, and the plants all accurately marked. I take off my hat to Henri Correvon, the great Geneva botanist, who has created so much beauty here.

By way of Orsières and Praz de Fort, we went up to the Saleinaz Hut, where we spent the night. On the following morning we crossed the Fenêtre de Saleinaz to the Cabane Julien Dupuis on the Plateau de Trient, also examining, on the descent, the Cabane d'Orny, which unfortunately has to serve also as a base for hunters.

We had nothing special to show for this fortnight's tour from hut to hut. And yet I had not been so happy for a long time. How much one does enjoy seeing again, at a more advanced age, a region where one has been active and successful in the prime of life !

After the beautiful tour of mountain huts in the Valais, I went in the beginning of October to Andermatt as instructor in a course for guides.

The Director there had departed from the written regulations and made a sensible adjustment in the conduct of the course. It took the form of combining theory with practice, in certain subjects where this could be done, without however giving preference to one at the expense of the other. In this way we were able to use the time at our disposal to better advantage, in view of the changeable weather.

I feel that if the existing regulations be adhered to strictly, rather too much wisdom may be doled out to

the students. The principal object should be practical training. The reading of maps, orientation, the use of the compass, as well as instructions as to conduct on tour and in the Club Huts can without doubt be most effectively given on the tour itself. Why weary the young men for days in a cramped room with endless theories?

In regard to the issuing of certificates at Andermatt I was sorry to observe that our S.A.C. is being allotted an inferior rôle. The dyarchy between Alpine Club and cantons should, in the interest of the cause, be eliminated as much as possible. The S.A.C. and its sections arrange the guide courses, conduct them in accordance with the regulations set up by the S.A.C., and safeguard the training of the guides accordingly. Therefore the granting of certificates should be in the hands of technical men; in this case, of the S.A.C. The cantons, however, who issue the guide laws, may make it their business to attend to the carrying out of these laws. How long will it be until we get a Swiss guide commission who will direct the whole guide organization, from the Bernina to Mont Blanc? Many a rub and much confusion might thereby be avoided.

The spring and summer of 1913 brought me strenuous work in connection with Club Huts. The rebuilding of the Boval Hut which had been destroyed by an avalanche on April 6th of that year, the alteration of the Rascher Hut on Piz Kesch, and of the old Boval Hut entailed for me, as Supervisor of huts of the Bernina Section, many errands, endless correspondence and also a fair amount of vexation.

Furthermore, at the request of Dr. Alfred Corti, a professor at the University of Bologna and the true author of the idea of a hut on the Crast' Agüzza Saddle,

and of the founder of the hut, Dr. Marco de Marchi of Milan, I had taken over the preparations for the building work, as well as the supervision of the transport of building material.

The inauguration of this eyrie, named in honour of Dr. de Marchi and his wife (Marco e Rosa), took place on September 14th. Heavy storms accompanied the pleasant festivity. We had no idea that on the eve of this event, four people had perished miserably on Piz Palü only 2½ miles away. And our descent that evening to Boval from the Marco e Rosa Hut was likewise in a snowstorm.

During the building of these huts I was able to carry out a few fine climbs. Once in the middle of June I set out with two Italian workmen from the Roseg valley over the Sella Pass to the Upper Scerscen Glacier, clambered from there up the rocks to the Crast' Agüzza Saddle and descended to Boval.

And on August 30th I ascended Piz Bernina all alone by the south ridge. It took me no more than 2½ hours from the saddle to the top and back. Nothing new for me, and yet it was very enjoyable.

The large new Boval Hut could not be inaugurated until October 23rd. In the spring, when the director of the Bernina Section was dealing with the choice of a site, the two of us put forward the timid proposal to erect the new hut, not in the Boval, but on the Gemsfreiheit at the foot of the so-called Festung, because up there a hut would be more serviceable to the real mountaineer. But we were defeated.

In the year of the war, 1914, there was little for me to show in the way of mountaineering feats. On two Sundays early in July I conducted two lively Fex ladies up Piz la Margna. Soon after that the world was in turmoil. My beautiful Forno district was blocked by

the military. The climber grew rusty. I had to confine myself to Piz la Margna, which I climbed three times in 1915.

In the summer of 1916, again, I could have done without my climbing boots and climbing breeches. Since I had to join the communal administration on May 1st, I could no longer absent myself *ad lib.* I accepted this responsible position only until such time as certain communal difficulties could be straightened out. One might well have applied to me the Italian saying, " When horses are scarce, we harness donkeys to the carriage." By the autumn an outside accountant and our efficient Communal Clerk had brought order out of disorder, and after the next accounting I regained my full liberty of movement.

Since in 1916 the Forno region might be entered with a military permit, I was able to climb Monte del Forno with my old friend, G. Thoma from St. Gallen, and his energetic wife. Those were pleasant hours with kindly, simple people.

An expedition which I enjoyed especially, but where I was not allowed to play first fiddle since I was there as a guest, was the ascent of Piz Chapütschin with the Swiss Geological Society on August 13th. I always liked to associate with experts on the subject of rocks. I listened silently to the discourses of the celebrated geologists, Albert Heim and Rudolf Staub, on the structure of the Bernina world, given with as much clarity and enthusiasm as if they had been born in the *Felsengrund.*

In the summer of 1917 I received two alluring offers for mountain tours in the Bernese Oberland and the Valais. But I did not trust my skin as yet, and declined.

When the change in my withered skin was in progress and a marked improvement set in, I felt young again and endowed with a new lease of life. This rejuvenation of a desolate sixty-three-year-old seemed like the flare-up of the fire before it goes out!

I ought to say at this point that the man who really roused this flicker in my activity as guide was Fritz Otto from Basle. At the beginning of September 1917 he came to my home in Fex with his cheerful companion, Emanuel Sandreuter. In the course of that sunny afternoon Fritz told me that they and Oscar Dollfus from Lausanne intended to carry out some climbs in the Bregaglia, and invited me to join them. His masterly powers of persuasion induced me to tear myself away from my marmot hut. And so on September 10th I set out for the Granite-Land for nine days.

I had no cause to regret this excursion. It led indirectly to a very gratifying experience two years later, when I had the privilege of introducing the man who actually suggested these notes,[1] Dr. Janggen of St. Gallen, to the Bregaglia mountains. And a further consequence was, that I was allowed to hold my first lantern lecture about my beloved mountains in the S.A.C., St. Gallen Section. Since this was a new departure for me, it appeared at first rather venturesome, and besides I lacked the necessary

[1] In a letter to Dr. Janggen in 1919 (about his memoirs) Klucker writes: "My dear Doctor, I really feel as if I had to tackle something monstrous, to undertake something which I am not equal to! It would be much easier for me to solve some difficult problems in the high Alps than to meddle in literary matters. And if I follow the advice of my friends, I do so because a hard 'must' compels me. I earnestly hope that there will be no disappointments, especially on the part of my well-wishers and friends."

pictures. But when another dear friend, Dr. Hans König of Zürich, promised me his support, I gave my consent. And I never regretted this step either, for I always remember with gratitude that day in St. Gallen, April 15th 1920, and all that developed from it.

Scarcely a week later I was in Chur lecturing on the same subject in the Association "Pro Grigione italiano." My perhaps somewhat rough-and-ready remarks must have struck home, because the newspapers of St. Gallen and Chur hailed me at once as a "new star" amongst the lecturers! And to-day my lecture chronicle includes thirty-four places where the sound of my tenor voice has been heard. I have lectured only upon invitation, and never on behalf of a tourist agency, as has been rumoured now and again. I was too proud to act as commercial traveller for others.

All these occasions brought hours of joy into my life, and alleviated the painful troubles of my home. I must twine a special laurel wreath for my friends in the large Uto Section in Zürich. There I gained the silent friendship of hundreds of good and lovable men. That is gratifying. I am 70 now, and ready for the last expedition.

CHAPTER IX

AUTUMN DAYS IN GRANITE-LAND

IN the previous chapter I referred to the renewal of youth of a sixty-three-year-old, and now I should like to go into this a little more fully.

On September 10th 1917, we met together at the appointed hour in Sils Maria: Fritz Otto, Emanuel Sandreuter, Oscar Dollfus with the guide Chaspar Grass from Pontresina, and myself.

Laden with considerable rucksacks we wandered gaily from Maloja up to the Forno Hut. A congenial evening without cards brought the pleasant day to a close. I may mention that, as former hut guardian, I had allowed no playing-cards there, and if any were found, threw them into the fire at once. Only weak creatures resort to "Jass" in the high Alps, when they have such ample opportunity for devoting themselves to it down in the valley.

The Bacone was our first objective, to be followed by Cima del Largo. Secretly I was overjoyed to think of meeting these two old acquaintances once more, and climbing them, although I could not suppress an inner misgiving lest I might have to play the part of ballast in these climbs.

We intended, after the work was done, to descend to the Albigna, so we carried considerable loads that next morning over the Forno Glacier and up to the northern Casnile Pass. From here we went round Piz Casnile on the west and reached the pretty Forcola del Riciöl at the south foot of the Bacone.

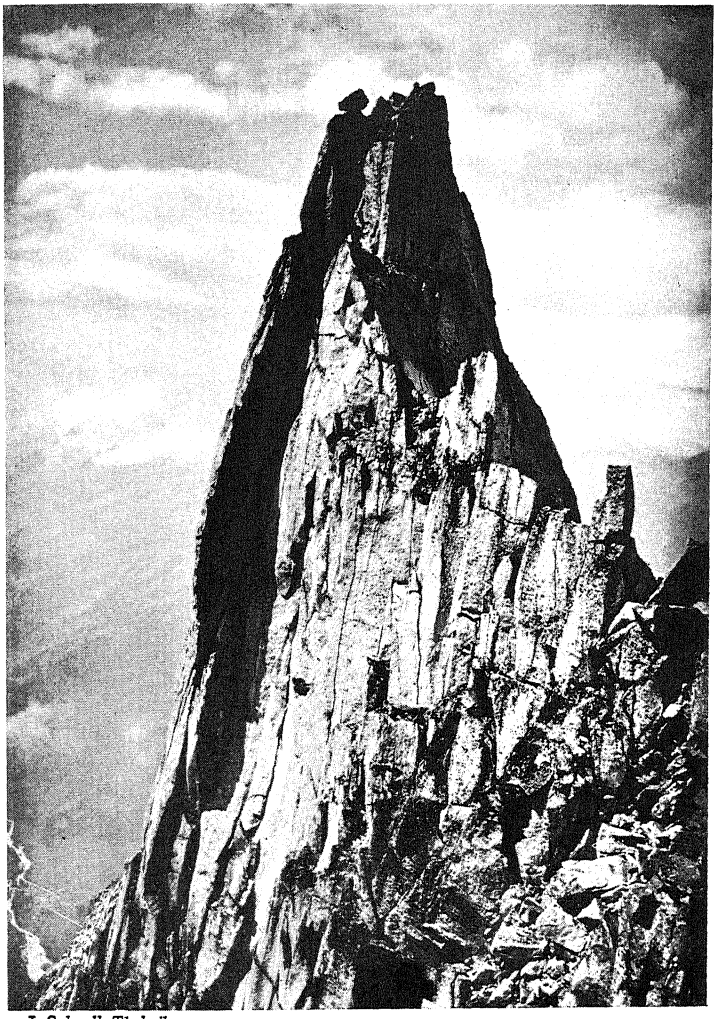
During the steep and laborious ascent to the Casnile Pass, two of my companions carried on a lively conversation about sport with amazing persistence. One of them was a genuine sportsman; the other was only devoted to sport in its theoretical aspect. This constant chattering on an ascent is really a nuisance; it taxes lungs and heart and should be avoided at all costs. I can even smoke my pipe without injury while I am climbing, but I cannot carry on a conversation.

Since we should have to pass by the Forcola once more, after crossing the east slope of the Bacone, all dispensable articles were deposited here before the coming climb.

I was not a little surprised when someone said: "*Der Alte* must take the lead!" I did not wait for a second invitation, for I thought to myself: "If you can do it at all, you can do it easiest in front." We formed two unequal parties: Otto went with Grass; Dollfus and Sandreuter roped up with me. The ascent in the south gully offered no difficulties, and after a short spell of step-cutting we reached the small jutting rock at the foot of the chimney. We set to work briskly. By the time we had surmounted the first 130 feet, I noted with some satisfaction that I was no ballast, although my two men were going extremely well. In an hour and a quarter all five of us stood upon the superb sentinel-top of the Bacone, or Bacun, as it is called in the valley dialect.

Thirty-four years ago I had first stood on this pinnacle with Theodor Curtius. And with a feeling of gratitude, my thoughts turned to this honourable friend, who had really done more than anyone else to develop my devotion to the wonderful Alps.

We did not make a prolonged halt upon the peak. But I enjoyed the short rest with that almost wistful



J. Gaberell, Thalwil

CIMA DEL LARGO

pleasure which only the old mountaineer feels; for he must soon be taking leave of this world, which despite all its sorrows he loves so well.

Since the descending route over the east ridge, especially at the large drop in the ridge, is not easy to see, I took the lead once more. That day I could do so without hesitation. Grass and Otto brought up the rear. After a capital scramble of a little more than an hour we stood on the rock saddle of the Forcola del Bacone.

In view of the precipitous southern walls of Cima del Largo we once more laid aside everything that we could do without. A brisk climb brought us over the south-eastern lower summit and connecting ridge to the rock tower of the Largo, where the slabby wall begins, with its cracks, nicks and bands. The actual scramble up the tower itself is exciting, but all too short. Although we had no *Kletterschuhe*, we were standing by the small cairn in barely half an hour.

The view from Cima del Largo is not so extensive as that from the Bacone. But the downward view into Vallone del Largo, into Val Bregaglia and the deep Albigna gorge, grips every beholder. One gets even a little glimpse of the Silsersee.

Those to whom the ordinary way to Cima del Largo does not afford enough scope for scrambling, may be recommended to try the Miescher–Heller route direct from the small Bacone Glacier over the south-west walls to the gap between the main and central peaks. This ascent, however, is only for the very experienced rock-climber.

In the descent I came last. Everything went smoothly, although at the high drop above the broad band I could have wished for longer legs. After

seventy-five minutes we reached our belongings on the Forcola del Bacone.

The next thing was to traverse the east side of the Bacone as far as the east ridge, which is none too easy a performance. Grass was leading, and I must say he did excellently. Another hour and a quarter, and we were sitting at our large *cache* in the saddle of the Forcola del Riciöl.

After the short halt we continued Albigna-wards. A thick mist came on down by the slopes of the Casnile sheep pastures, so that two of our comrades, who were in a greater hurry than the rest of us, missed their direction, and instead of turning north-west, went straight downward off the path. Shortly before nightfall we reached the Albigna Hut, and a few minutes afterwards our fleet-footed wanderers also arrived.

On the following morning our plans were countered by wind and snowfall. The outlook was forlorn. However, we had plenty to eat. And yet I heard someone sigh after breakfast: "What are we to do all day long in this little hut?" No one wanted to follow my example; I had crept on to my *Pritsche* and settled down for a comfortable sleep.

I have always possessed the gift, or virtue, of being able to sleep day and night when the weather is bad, only coming to life at meal-times. But I must confess that on that September 12th there was no sleep, for unfortunately Sandreuter found the accursed playing-cards—dirty, sticky things! My proposal to boil them clean was declined indignantly. And then the play began. They trumped and shuffled, and now and again dropped an emphatic word. This lasted until midday; and from midday until dark.

On September 13th the weather was no better. In

addition, a raw cold north wind swept over the Albigna and through the hut as well, driving the Jass players from the cold living- and sleeping-room into the warmer kitchen. Our Oscar Dollfus could stand it no longer, and in the afternoon made his way down toward the valley and home. In the evening two new men arrived, Dr. Kerez and his guide, Giovanni Paravicini, who had strayed in the mist on their way from the Sciora Hut over some "new" Cacciabella Pass.

September 14th brought better weather. We decided to make good use of the day. Since on account of the fresh snow climbing proper was out of the question, we chose the glacier peak, Cima di Castello (11,092 ft.) as our objective.

This time I was one of the guided, and was very glad that two strong young men like Grass and Paravicini were of the party, because of the deep snow higher up. A biting north wind met us on the upper plateau of the northern Castello Glacier. It was snowing hard as high as the summit, and unluckily the view, so magnificent in clear weather, was nil. Grey clouds surged round all the higher mountains.

Very soon we returned.

Leaving the Bocchetta del Castello on the right, we descended over the southern Castello Glacier and reached the uppermost basin of the Albigna Glacier north of the Fuorcla di Zocca. Since it was as yet early in the afternoon, we decided to climb far enough up the north-west slopes of Piz Zocca to get a good view of the Ago di Sciora. As a result of this détour the verdict was: There is nothing for us on the Ago di Sciora for the next two days; Punta Pioda di Sciora might be considered instead.

The morning of September 15th promised well, and

so we decided upon a ramble to the Gallo, for a closer view of its beak and crest.

Eastward from the Passo Val della Neve, and finally over slippery moraine débris and a small glacier, we reached the north foot of the curious rock formation called the Gallo (9,114 ft.).

Our first attempt was in fact made at the right spot. But when Grass, who had taken the lead, declared that he could not get over the high and smooth step, we presumed that we had missed the right starting-point, and tried further to the left at a slabby wall. Small cracks helped us up for a distance of some 130 feet. Without *Kletterschuhe* or handholds, and with but scanty hold in the crack which ran diagonally upwards, I felt that the undertaking was somewhat risky. And we promptly decided to retreat.

Once again we tried at the first spot. And lo! after a little support from below and a vigorous pull with the arms, Grass stood upon a rock ledge, which though somewhat smooth was quite passable, and led upwards. At the top of the ledge and to the right of it we found the rope rings of former climbers. On my later ascents with only one exception I have always turned this first step on the right. But it is difficult.

The further ascent as far as the now famous cleft at the summit block does not present any undue difficulties for the climber if he keeps to the usual way. Neither is the cleft itself any magic feat for the expert climber. If he is short, he will work himself upward with his back braced against the lower summit and his feet against the wall of the actual summit until he can reach backwards with his left hand to the edge of the lower pinnacle. He turns round at once and draws himself all the way up on to this pinnacle. To straighten yourself up and step over the fissure, some

4 feet 3 inches wide, to the summit slab is a trifle ticklish, especially for the man who is crossing this cleft for the first time. Also, once upright upon the lower pinnacle, he must not deliberate long whether he should risk the step or not, otherwise the cleft will appear to him once as wide again! The jump is a piece of acrobatics which is not necessary. The tall climber need not even back up the cleft, for from a small step on the southern edge of the lower summit he will be able to reach its top. Provided that he can do a pull-up, he will draw himself up the whole way.

An ascent of the Gallo is excellent climbing practice, and since it is not far from the hut, it can be carried out in the early morning to fill out part of a lost day.[1]

Something rather unusual for me happened on the descent. I got into too close contact with the rough summit slab, and the consequence was that in the afternoon I had to lie on my front outside the hut for half an hour, while Sandreuter came to the rescue with needle and thread and mended the rent in my breeches. Incidentally he had fared no better on the Gallo himself.

On the morning of September 16th we marched in clear weather up the Albigna Glacier, left it after about an hour and a half, and bearing to the right, mounted to the small Ago Glacier. We did not risk an attack upon the Ago. And it was just as well, because on Punta Pioda we encountered more fresh snow than we cared for. We soon discovered our point of entrance at the foot of the small southern Sciora couloir, and working our way to the right for half an hour, reached the broad shoulder on the east ridge of the mountain.

[1] The overhanging top of the Gallo crashed down in 1923, so that the name Gallo or "Güggel" has lost its meaning.

From here, instead of following the easy rock band which runs across the east wall towards the north, old Klucker got off the route to the left and on to the slabby east wall. The next hour gave us a difficult and ticklish scramble. Owing to the melting snow, the rocks had become wet and slippery and hard to climb. After a great deal of trouble we at last regained the ordinary route, and had no further difficulty in reaching the summit rocks. The last 130 feet below the top are not easy, but in twenty minutes we were sitting on the summit (10,590 ft.).

My companions from Basle could not have enough of the marvellous view around us. The dark needle of the Ago di Sciora at close range, the long, precipitous gorge of the Sciora couloir beneath us; opposite, the abrupt north walls of the Gemelli, Cengalo and Badile with their plunging ice gullies, and the downward view upon the wild Bondasca Glacier tearing its way into the valley below—all these hold the spectator with an incomparable and unforgettable fascination.

As I discerned far below the familiar oasis of Sass Fura, a sense of sadness overcame me. I was reminded of the wonderful, but also of the many troubled hours I had spent on this wooded citadel at the foot of my proud Badile. And over yonder was the ghastly steep ravine of the Gemelli couloir with the high and almost vertical ice-pitch in the middle. There, on June 9th 1892, with two distracted comrades, I had sought and found shelter in the bergschrund from heavy stonefall! The thought that I had earned nothing but ingratitude for the heavy labours of those years, made my blood boil, there on Punta Pioda, as it does to this day.

But away with these gloomy memories! Let us be

thinking about the descent from our stately pinnacle—and for that it is most necessary to keep cool.

Without discomfort we reached the Ago Glacier and its small moraine down on the left. There we unroped. We had really intended after our climb to cross the southern Cacciabella Pass to the Sciora Hut that same evening, but the advanced hour and our weary limbs made us turn once more toward the friendly Albigna Hut.

For September 17th we had planned to cross over into Val Bondasca, and as the weather was perfect on that morning, we decided to include the ascent of the southern Piz Cacciabella. After cleaning the hut thoroughly we departed, mounting up to the northern or old Cacciabella Pass. Below the pass we turned to the right and went straight up to the gap on the south side of our mountain. Almost exactly three hours from the hut we stood upon the summit of the Southern Piz Cacciabella (9,742 ft.).

We fairly revelled in the warm sunshine and the radiant scene. Memories came in a flood. Oh, Bondasca, how much I have received from you! Are you satisfied with me, I wonder?

Now for the descent! From the saddle south of the peak we went steeply down into the couloir, which drops abruptly westward to the stony desert of the Sciora Alp. The descent of the couloir required great caution on account of the rotten nature of the rocks. After a little over an hour we left the couloir behind us. Its passage was difficult that autumn. And then through the sea of boulders down to the meagre pastures of Sciora.

In the Albigna Hut the guide Paravicini and Dr. Kerez had referred enthusiastically to a resplendent nymph on the Eraveder Alp. My two companions

from Basle suddenly remembered this, and much to my entertainment spent some time in a vain treasure-hunt —there was only glitter, not gold. So we left the Sciora Hut lying on our left and hastened down to the Eraveder siren. Before the hut sat a very robust damsel, with dark skin and raven-black hair. Her face shone in the sun, as if she had just treated it with fish-oil. "Oh!" A side glance at my companions told me all. Otto made some roguish remark to the effect that the Alpine Eros would find no votaries in Eraveder to-day. So we ordered goat's milk. It was delicious.

The descent to Promontogno is truly romantic, and even more so is the panorama of the Bondasca mountains from Soglio opposite. But we were far too thirsty to appreciate romance. We fairly raced down to mine hostess Moltrasio's. And what she brewed by order of the Basle gourmets certainly quenched our thirst, though it was hardly innocent. As I tasted some of it, involuntarily there came to my mind our Saviour on the Cross at Golgotha.

In the evening we sauntered on to Spino. The sun was setting, and only high up painted glowing colours upon the walls of Sciora, Cengalo and Badile, while the sharp cleft of the Bondasca and the green pine forest before it grew darker and darker. We stood still to look at this incomparable scene, and were quite silent as the last glow died away.

On the September morning that followed, the sun rose radiant and gave us one more lovely picture as a parting token. In Sils Maria I reluctantly took leave of my companions, to whom I had become quite attached.

This autumn trip in my Granite-Land restored me—a discouraged man—to something of my former self.

CHAPTER X

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS IN THE SUMMER OF 1918

THE ground was hard and hoary with frost when I left the quiet Fextal on July 1st. I was glad to get away for a little while, but I was oppressed with anxiety about the health of my sister. Upon me, as the youngest of our ever-dwindling family, had fallen more burdens than I was well able to bear. And what would be left for me, once I could no longer swing my ice-axe? I dared not think of it. True, I had friends, but one does not care to knock at other people's doors; one seems to lose something by it.

There was a course for guides in Pontresina, which the Bernina Section had taken over, and I was to act as instructor. When I saw the future guides before me, I could not help recalling the time when I had taken refuge in this career. Many things had changed since then. There was now a Cantonal Guide Law, and a Swiss Alpine Club, which was a benefit to the guide body. But there had been in Graubünden for some years a Cantonal Guide Association also, which I always opposed as an independent. I regarded a banding together of guides as unnecessary, and regretted any possibility of the loosening of ties with the S.A.C., which had already done so much for us.

It was a case of settling down to hard work. After the days devoted to theoretical studies I looked for-

ward to the practical part of the course. We ascended the rocky summits of Las Sours (The Sisters) and made poor jokes at the same time; we cut steps in the Pers icefall and looked for a route through the maze of crevasses of the difficult icefall—(in German, *séracs* !)—upon which one of the group leaders strolled about without a rope. I do not mind if tourists climb Piz Roseg or the broken Bondasca Glacier unroped, be it from laziness or bravado, and then prate about it in Alpine periodicals. That is their business. But guides and would-be guides had better abstain from such manœuvres, otherwise they commit a punishable offence.

We climbed Piz Morteratsch (12,316 ft.) in three parties. From the top one gets an unusually fine and instructive picture of the mountain world of the Upper Engadine. Following different routes we met the next day in mist and rain showers on the top of the Diavolezza, in the little hut "Zum ewigen Schnee." After the criticism was finished we practised roping down during the descent to Pontresina. In the final examination old Klucker had no voice, and went home grumbling.

Three days later I mounted from Disentis in the Vorder Rhein Valley up to the Medelser Hut to take part in an Alpine training course of the Uto Section in Zürich. As a matter of fact, such courses are not specially to our interest, for after a time we guides lose tourists through them, inasmuch as they promote touring without guides, though this is not their purpose. Still, one does not become a good independent mountaineer very quickly, and the many accidents make a serious plea for caution. I know a number of guideless mountaineers, especially from the academic professions, and some of the best of them I include

amongst my friends. The reader will therefore not misunderstand my attitude.

It was still war-time and the rationing of food had not yet come to an end. But this was not noticeable in the Medelser Hut. I had no objections to raise.

The weather was amiably disposed, so the exercises on the crevassed Platta Glacier and the ascents in the northern and southern Medelser mountains—twelve peaks—were accomplished successfully.

Then on July 20th we rambled over beautiful pastures to Alp Morterascio in the upper Val Luzzone, west of Piz Terri. At that time there was a dilapidated little shelter there for mountaineers. It was lucky for us eighteen men that the herdsmen of Aquila in Val Blenio had just come up to the alp, and they made us welcome. A half-dozen dark-eyed pretty Ticino maids were there too. Oh, how those tired lads from Zürich began to thaw! Nothing was lacking but guitars and mandolins to lend grace and rhythm to all the shuffling and turning movements. I watched the gay life about me with mixed feelings, inwardly cursing my many decades, the thinness of my hair, and most of all a carbuncle the size of a hen's egg on my left cheek, which, painful and unabashed, was making itself conspicuous under the grey stubbly beard.

The next morning one section went over Piz Terri to the Lenta Hut, the others with old Klucker took a long, laborious route with hard ups and downs through the rough Val Scaradra and over the Passo di Sorreda (9,088 ft.) to the same hut. At the top of the pass it refreshed me to find some remarkably lovely flowers. I counted no less than fifteen species within a limited area. I thought of my dead Alpine garden

near Sils Maria and of the one near Bourg St. Pierre, and became almost mournful.

In the beautiful Lenta Hut we took a thorough rest. I marvelled at the excellent library, and was amused to note that the medicine chest contained no Hoffmann's drops—remembering the casualty list which my friend Dr. Anton Hössli of St. Moritz treasured against these hut drops.

A few ambitious members of the party next day ascended the Zervreilahorn from the south. Returning somewhat out of humour in the evening, one of them growled at me: "It's not quite right, your remark this morning, that even calves get up the Zervreilahorn!"—"But you got up all right," I answered amid general laughter.

On the same evening reinforcements came from Zürich. Our next destination was the Adula region and the Ticino. We made our way in five hours over the crevassed Lenta Glacier to the Rheinwaldhorn (11,175 ft.). Thick mist shrouded the peak. We descended over the Lenta Lücke and the easy Paradis Glacier to the Zapport Hut, and landed at 6 p.m. in the small village of Hinterrhein. There we enjoyed a good farewell dinner and stirring speeches.

During the two weeks which followed, I took a settled married couple for a long mountain tour. The lady was no dark-eyed sylph from Aquila, but a robust St. Gallenite, the mother of five children. Her husband was Gustav Thoma, a witty, likeable fellow. He died in 1924, in the prime of life. Frau Thoma, actuated by Good Samaritan sentiments, would have liked to apply vigorous treatment to my carbuncle, but I had to decline her tender ministrations firmly. "That's enough for a beginning," I thought,

and I said to her husband: "Well, my dear Thoma, I think I might risk it with you!" He smiled understandingly.

On July 25th we went to the Zapport Hut. It stands, in point of fact, near "Paradis" and "Hölle," and was still at that time a dirty, smoky hole. To-day it is as cosy and homelike as the one in the Lenta valley. We missed the Rheinwaldhorn on the following day owing to bad weather. And when we got to it on July 27th, it wrapped itself in mist and whirling snow. Too bad, because the view from this peak is unusually extensive and beautiful. It was still snowing and raining the next morning, so we hastened down to Ilanz and had a proper rest in the Hotel Oberalp.

There was no hurry about the forthcoming Tödi tour, since fresh snow had fallen as far down as the pastures. We drove up to Truns trying to get some fresh butter for the next four days in the mountains, but all strategy was vain. This tiresome World War! Why did it have to bother us away up there! We were neutral after all!

On July 30th we climbed, heavily laden, up to the Reinhart Hut near the Ponteglias Glacier ("Puntaiglas" in the topographical atlas is wrong), and in anticipation of an arduous march, traversed the glacier next morning to the Ponteglias Lücke. Down below, the new snow was frozen hard, but towards the Porta da Gliems, we sank in knee-deep. Since I did not trust the snow on the northern slope of the Stockgron, I unroped myself and investigated its condition alone, crossing the slope. It would go. Returning to the anxiously waiting Thoma couple I roped up again and we arrived safely at the upper portion of the Biferten Glacier. There rucksacks were left. Thence

we trudged undismayed up to the summit of the Tödi, reaching it at noon. With mingled feelings, I contemplated the deep snow on the Maderaner peaks, upon which my companions' hearts had been set. I was not to be charged with having lost my discerning eye.

With the greatest caution I guided them over deep snow down the much crevassed Biferten Glacier, to the Gelbwändli and Schneerunse. By 5 p.m. we had reached the old Fridolin Hut.

On the morning of August 2nd, a roaring *Föhnwind* swept over the whole mountain range. It was that day that two of the most daring mountaineers, my young friends Carl Steiner and Andreas Michel, perished in the snow on Monte di Scerscen. They had probably missed the right moment for turning back. I have not yet got over my sorrow for these brave men. Steiner had splendid achievements to his credit in the Mont Blanc region, in the Urner mountains, and also in my Granite-Land. And he was so modest in all his successes. I rank him with the very best of the guideless mountaineers of modern times.

We hurried on over the Planura (9,646 ft.) and down the broad Hüfi Glacier into the Maderanertal.

Carl Egloff from St. Gallen joined us at Amsteg. How delighted I was to be able to climb for a week with this excellent "Wall-creeper"! There were no spectacular feats, I confess, for the weather was against it. On the other hand I enjoyed the nimble wit of my comrade every minute. The only thing his humour failed to manage was to ferret out any fresh butter, either in Uri or in Unterwalden.

We wanted to go from Erstfeld to the Krönte Hut, and over the Gross Spannort to Engelberg. And we did it, although partly in pouring rain, mist and cold

west wind. The rock mountain itself was covered with fresh snow from top to bottom, but that was not sufficient to prevent a certain member of the fair sex from being as talkative as if she had been in the vegetable market of a big city. And still they say that mountains make one silent!

In view of the fresh snow we contented ourselves with passes. To begin with we went over the Joch Pass to the picturesque Engstlenalp. Here the artful Egloff enticed me away from the company into a corner, and treated me to a drop of delicious red wine. During these revels, and just as I was smacking my lips, Nemesis appeared in the manly form of Thoma casting reproachful glances at us. For this misdeed he later inscribed the following in my guide-book: ". . . condemns the use of alcohol with the sole exception of anisette, cognac and red Valtelline." In one point he was mistaken, for, as good Helvetians, Egloff and I were drinking not Valtelline, but a native product, the heavenly nectar Dôle de Sion.

We bade each other good-bye at the small village of Nessental. In mist and rain I roamed over the Susten Pass to Wassen, and thence went by train to Andermatt, which I found swarming with influenza-stricken soldiers. Feeling somewhat out of humour, I went on to Zürich the same day, and on the following evening re-entered my hermitage in the Fextal.

In the Forno Hut on August 13th I met my Fextal neighbour, the eminent geologist Dr. Rudolf Staub —now Professor in Zürich—and his porter Thöny, from the Prätigau. We wanted to climb Cima Vazzeda and Cima di Rosso. The brittle Vazzeda is, geologically speaking, probably the most interesting formation in the Bregaglia Alps. It took us a

long time to make the ascent, for the geologist with his hammer pursues different ends from those of the record hunter. The sturdy Thöny had plenty of stones to carry, but bore up well under his heavy load. At the lowest point between the two peaks there was lengthy examination of rocks, and references to maps. And there I left my irreplaceable tobacco pouch behind, and did not notice it until we were over on the Rosso.

During our meal in the hut Staub asked: "What are we going to do to-morrow?"—"If it fits in with your plans, we might tackle that awkward Punta Rasica," was my hesitant reply.—"Done"! said he.

By 7 a.m. on August 15th we were at the bergschrund of the snow wall, by which one reaches the gap. The schrund ran along the base of the whole slope and gave us enough to do. At 9 a.m. we sat at the foot of the difficult summit tooth. Our geologist worked here for perhaps an hour with map, pencil and photographs. Meanwhile I strove to persuade our Thöny to come with us to the top, but he would not. He stared fixedly at the dizzy vertical pinnacle, and finally justified himself as follows: "In fifty years' time it will be all one whether I have been up to-day or not. And if I say a word about 'Rasica' in September to my *Fraueli*, she will certainly be jealous and ask me, 'Who is she, that Rasica?'"—But eventually we made him come, and forty minutes later we were all three sitting on the granite Rasica.

In descending, owing to a wrong manœuvre with the rope on the part of the porter in front, I was almost pulled off into the abyss. The thin snow on the snow-wall was inclined to go and called for the utmost caution, as the steps we had cut did not hold. At 4.15 we entered the Forno Hut.

On the following day Thöny carried 130 lb. of baggage to Maloja, while we two scaled the jagged Pizzo dei Rossi (9,934 ft.) by a new route over the extremely loose west ridge. We stayed up there for three hours, in most beautiful weather. I admired the zeal and endurance of my companion, as he busied himself with map, pencil, telescope and photographs. He would scarcely take a quarter of an hour off for rest and a bite.

We descended to the Muretto Pass and home to the Fextal. Staub carried a heavy sack of baggage, but would not allow me to burden myself with stones, a different attitude from that of Rydzewski and Whymper. As to that, he did not need me as a guide either, for he was himself a splendid rock-climber.

Two days later he asked me: "What do you think about the Ago di Sciora?"—I nodded, and that very evening we sat in the snug Albigna Hut. Thöny was there, too. At the point where one strikes the lowest rock-wall which runs from the Sciora di dentro northward to the Ago, we noticed at once that a tremendous fall of rock had torn away the lowest part of the rock band at the beginning of the ascent. But we soon found another starting-point to the right and easily got on to the rock from the little Ago Glacier. After clambering for about twenty minutes, we went straight up, instead of keeping to the left, and here we had to work very hard until we reached the large slab. Once over this it is not hard to get to the upper portion of the original rock band, which leads to the Bocchetta dell' Ago. Since our goal to-day was an Ago and not a Rasica, our Thöny remained quietly at the gap.

With *Kletterschuhe*, and roped with a ninety-feet rope, we attacked the 450-feet summit tower direct from the gap, and after a first-rate clamber of thirty-

five minutes we stood upon the airy pinnacle. Two well-pleased men shook each other by the hand. It was my third time up there, and to-day, as I write these reminiscences, I have ten Ago climbs to my record.

In the Bocchetta we rejoined our contented porter, followed the old rock band of approach as far as its break of August 1915, roped down for a few feet, came to the outlet of the stone-shoot of the Sciora di dentro, crossed the slope at a quick pace northward as far as our point of attack of the morning, took up our axes there and wandered gaily out of the Albigna and down into the valley.

Seven days later I stood once more on the Colle Vazzeda, this time with Herr Eric Brown of Baden and my colleague Andreas Zuan. We did not particularly trust the weather. Mist and clouds were rolling up. Nevertheless we did our gymnastics over the exposed and interesting Vazzeda–Rosso ridge. And lo and behold, in its lowest dip lay the tobacco pouch I had left behind on August 14th. Herr Brown wanted to know how the pouch had got there. I explained, thereby calling forth the remark: "Oho! So you entice me over the Vazzeda in order to recover your tobacco pouch, and I have to pay expenses!" We all laughed heartily.

It began to snow. No time for a smoke, but a quick climb instead to Cima di Rosso and down on to the Forno Glacier, where thunder and lightning gave us a lively reception. In the shelter of the inn at Maloja Herr Brown complained that his pipe would not draw; his tobacco had got damp. I said: "As you have a just claim on my Vazzeda tobacco, I shall be delighted to offer you some. It has a high Alpine flavour, and has kept nice and dry under the cape

which you laughed at this morning. I don't smoke the best English blend, of course, but a mixture of Ticino twist and the ends of my Toscani." But he declined with a firm gesture.

On a fine morning in the beginning of September I conducted a lady up Piz Glüschaint, and on the Day of Prayer took two acquaintances up Piz la Margna, which I have known and loved from my youth.

The summer of 1918 had passed. I was grateful to the Almighty that he had granted to an old man such a series of beautiful mountain climbs. And I was not a little proud that I could still call myself a guide with the feeling of assurance that I was indeed one.

CHAPTER XI

MONT BLANC BY THE AIGUILLE BLANCHE DE PETERET

IT was Klucker's intention to write fully concerning this memorable climb of August 14th–17th 1893, which lasted in all for eighty-eight hours—a climb which is ranked by one who has done both, as second only to the traverse of both peaks of Ushba. With his exceptional topographical accuracy he was not altogether satisfied with Dr. Güssfeldt's account, as published in his book *Der Mont Blanc*. The following summary is of necessity based mainly on Güssfeldt's account, with extracts from Klucker's letter to Capt. Farrar of May 4th 1926, and from Farrar's classic paper published in the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 33.

Güssfeldt met his two guides, Emile Rey and Klucker, in Courmayeur on August 9th 1893. He had chosen his men well; furthermore, they knew each other's temperament and methods, having guided Rydzewski during the previous June.

"I never saw a man so cool and considerate in his doings, and so passionate in his feelings, as Rey," writes Güssfeldt in the *Alpine Journal*. "I still remember him on a desperate place shouting out in a fit of energy, 'I never turned back in my life; I shall not do so to-day;' and then he began carefully to cut steps down an ice-wall for three hours together. His mountaineering craft was hardly equalled, and he was so careful, especially when climbing rocks, that when the work was hard and dangerous his appearance might even have been called clumsy."



EMILE REY

From a photograph kindly lent by his son ADOLPHE REY



DR. PAUL GÜSSFELDT

From a photograph kindly lent by the D. u. Ö. Alpenverein

He adds, "If his prudence were to be betrayed, it was by his irascibility."

"J'ai toujours eu de la chance," Rey once remarked; he had as implicit a belief in his luck as had Güssfeldt in his own.

In the summer of 1895, he was leading Sir George Morse's party down a steep ice slope on Mont Maudit.

"It was on such places as these that he was happiest—places requiring care, and taxing his energy and skill, and where his perfect icemanship gave confidence to the whole party. In the descent of this slope I was taking ordinary precautions, paying out the rope as Rey cut the steps, and, having tightened it a little too much at one period, he looked up and said, 'Ce n'est pas nécessaire, monsieur; moi, je ne glisse jamais.'"[1]

Three days later, on easy rocks, he fell.

Güssfeldt himself was at this date 53 years of age, somewhat past his prime as a climber, but still full of that determination which had brought him ten years earlier to within 1,300 feet of the summit of Aconcagua. He was not merely a great traveller, but a most experienced mountaineer. M. Vallot, meeting him for the first time at his observatory on Mont Blanc in August 1892, writes:

"Towards evening a cry of joy was heard outside, and all hands were outstretched to welcome Emile Rey. He was followed by a traveller of ripe age, stoutish, of rugged aspect; the iron crampons on his feet reminded me vaguely of a crocodile's jaws, and contributed somewhat to give him *un air rébarbatif*."

What with Güssfeldt's fatigue and his grating French accent, conversation was at first difficult; but a simple

[1] *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 18. One may contrast with this an example of Klucker's caution. "He 'played' me down a difficult bit of rock," writes Dr. Wilson. "It was one he knew well, and I knew that he wouldn't slip. But he refused to start until I had got him belayed."

meal restored his strength, and as M. Vallot listened to Güssfeldt's unvarnished tale of their passage of the Col de la Brenva—the hours of ascent over steep ice slopes, the fall of séracs down the couloir which they had left but a few minutes before, their slow ascent to the summit where despite his fatigue Güssfeldt had experimented with the boiling of water—"I realized then that I was in the presence of a serious explorer, a conscientious student of mountains, who sought out difficult climbs, not from bravado but from a taste for conquering difficulties, admitting the fear of critical situations, but mastering them by an indomitable courage."

Güssfeldt confesses to a childish trust in his beloved Mont Blanc. He would gladly have started at once, seeing the conditions—his plans demanded four days of continuous fine, warm weather—but his only training was a sea-voyage of some weeks. He decided therefore to climb the Aiguille Noire de Péteret (12,402 ft.), which forms the southern extremity of the great bastion running southward from Mont Blanc, itself dominating the desolate hollow known as the Fauteuil des Allemands. Here the party bivouacked on the night of the 10th, ascending the peak next day, the rocks being entirely snow-free; only in two places was the rope used. "On my return," writes Güssfeldt, "I was tired, it is true, but quite sufficiently in training for my new campaign"—a remarkable statement from a man of 53, already *un peu fort*; but Güssfeldt held that by practising daily gymnastics one can get into training for big climbs without leaving home; assisted in his own case by the excellent system of Dr. Schreber, and certain lung, knee and thigh exercises.

The Aiguille Blanche de Péteret had already been



Bottega d'Arte Alpina, Courmayeur

THE SOUTHERN FLANK OF MONT BLANC

On skyline, from left to right, Picco Luigi Amedeo, Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, Mont Blanc, Col de la Brenva ; left foreground, Dames Anglaises, Aiguille Blanche de Péteret ; right foreground, Brenva Glacier ; Ice-ridge on Brenva route just above the cloud

climbed in 1885 from the west side, from the upper Fresnay Glacier; one attempt had been made from the east or Brenva side, without success.

Güssfeldt's party started at 4 a.m. on August 14th. Four porters accompanied them to the first bivouac, one of whom was to continue with Güssfeldt and his guides on the next day. It was not an easy matter to get porters, so evil was the reputation of the Aiguille Blanche.[1]

The party mounted the slopes of the Mont de la Brenva, crossed the central portion of the Brenva Glacier, at this time much broken, moving diagonally upwards. The passage of the glacier took 2½ hours, where they had counted on taking four or five.

Towards 2.30 p.m. they reached the right bank, at the foot of the Aiguille Blanche, where the glacier swings to the right round the base of the Dames Anglaises and the Aiguille Noire. Thence they climbed diagonally up to the right, left shoulder to the mountain, towards the ravine lying between the Aiguille Blanche and Mont Blanc de Courmayeur. After a short passage of séracs and avalanche débris, they reached good rocks, and soon after passed the site of the previous bivouac, taking thence some dried larch-branches, intending to bivouac higher.

"I find in my notes," writes Güssfeldt, "these laconic words: 'At first easy, then bad; at 4.20 p.m. out of danger.' There was at first a couloir of ice to cross, then barely practicable rocks, and the danger of falling stones and séracs. No doubt it was because of these difficulties that our predecessors bivouacked below these passages."

A rocky arête rose in front of them, on which certain prominent rocks promised a safe shelter, and for

[1] From sunrise until early afternoon, in fine weather, the east face is in places much exposed to stonefall.

these they aimed. Towards 5.30 p.m. they reached this bivouac site, which Güssfeldt places at 10,500 feet, but which in Farrar's estimate was not higher than 9,200 feet.

Güssfeldt's account of the climbing difficulties is not borne out by Farrar, whose party repeated this expedition a fortnight later, and who records only one passage of real foot and hand work, and that well up the arête above the Col de Péteret, immediately above the site of Güssfeldt's second bivouac.

Concerning the site of their bivouac of August 14th, Klucker writes to Farrar:

"Our bivouac place on the Aiguille Blanche of August 14th 1893 was a little higher up than the one used by yourself and the two Maquignaz. . . . Being on the rock ridge, which rises towards the right, it is absolutely safe from falling stones. . . . According to my notes, we reached our camping-place about 5.30 p.m. Rey wanted to halt lower down. . . . I protested against this, because I observed on the rocks there, and towards the right in the direction of the rock arête, evidence of falling stones everywhere. Unroped and at wide intervals, we crossed as quickly as possible to the small rock arête. At about 6 p.m. I climbed further up the arête by myself, in order to prepare for the following morning our route to the main mountain over the steep trough-like slope, so that we might not be delayed by step-cutting work on August 15th. Dr. Güssfeldt does not write a word about this, nor about many other things."

On arrival at the bivouac, according to Güssfeldt's account, the porter who was to accompany them next day announced his intention of returning to Courmayeur with the others. Eventually he agreed to continue, "and during the whole expedition he proved himself brave and able, as befits one bearing the name of César Ollier."[1] Klucker refers this incident to the next day.

[1] He became a well-known guide, accompanying the Duke of the Abruzzi to Ruwenzori.

"Unfortunately we were late in starting on the morning of the 15th," he writes, "the reason being a prolonged and animated dispute with the porters! None of them wanted to come with us. Undoubtedly Rey, as chief guide, was at fault in neglecting to appoint down in Courmayeur the porter who was to accompany us. After a good deal of encouragement and persuasion, César Ollier decided at last to come."

Meanwhile, the men were smoothing out the ground for a bivouac. Emile Rey, whose care for his employer's comfort struck Farrar's special attention next year on the Matterhorn, became at once quartermaster, valet and cook, while Güssfeldt, following his principles as explorer, awaited the preparations of his men.

Day changed to night, and a cold piercing wind sprang up. At their feet the Brenva Glacier dipped out of sight, and beyond it lay the houses and fields of Entrèves, and the woods of Val Ferret. In the middle distance, the Grand Combin; forty miles away, Monte Rosa in its whole width, the Lyskamm barely distinguishable before it; Matterhorn, Dent Blanche and Weisshorn curiously dwarfed owing to the distance. All the more strongly the line of the Géant and Grandes Jorasses stood out near at hand.

There was no sleep for Güssfeldt that night; he lay waiting with anxious patience for the dawn of the 15th.

At 4.30 a.m., according to Güssfeldt, they were under way. The lower portion of the climb, he says, was ideally suited by nature for falls of ice and stone. In an ascending traverse they had constantly to cross stone-shoots, often filled with hard ice, where it was impossible either to hurry or to dodge stones. At a height of 11,600 feet they reached an ice gully thirty steps wide; this was the most exposed point, and at that moment a stone went whistling by. Rey at

once unroped and began to cut steps, Klucker watching the couloir above to warn Rey of coming danger, that he might then retreat along the steps already cut. When he reached the far side the worst was over, and the others followed quickly.

"The sun had already made its appearance," writes Klucker, "by the time we reached the rocks, and it began to get lively above our heads. After a short climb over easy rock we decided to cross towards the left over two steep snow gullies. . . . Before we had advanced a hundred steps we were driven back by falling stones. Thereupon we turned to the right and got to a rib of rock well-defined in its lower part, and which leads in a straight line to the summit."

Here they halted for half an hour. Following this arête, now on rock, now on snow—"the last 150 feet were exceedingly disagreeable," says Klucker, "owing to masses of loose stones"—they reached the foot of the final snow-cap, up which 130 steps landed them shortly before 11 a.m. on the summit of the Aiguille Blanche (13,482 ft.).

Farrar's party found these steps half-melted on August 27th, and took twenty-one minutes in climbing the final cap. He describes the summit as an exquisitely delicate little point, the apex of four snow arêtes.

The summit of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur lay less than two miles distant; nevertheless they were destined to spend twenty-six hours more before reaching it.

The ridge drops northward from the Aiguille Blanche to the Col de Péteret, interrupted by two rock towers, which the party turned on the Brenva side. More than two hours were needed to descend to the Col de Péteret, after which they followed the arête upward, taking later to the rocks on the Fresnay

side. The afternoon was exceedingly hot. Towards 3 p.m. they halted at 13,400 feet for a meal. The summit of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur was little more than 2,000 feet above them; four to five hours if the arête should prove to be good snow, but six to eight if it should change into ice. In either case night must overtake them during the climb.

They decided therefore to bivouac, finding a flat place at nearly 14,000 feet. "We had merely to put down our rucksacks, and take out the meagre provisions which remained. No wood, no blankets, no spirit! And thirteen hours to pass there, from 5 p.m. to 6 a.m.!"

Farrar passed this bivouac on August 27th at 3.33 p.m.—

"under a big rock on the Fresnay side—a fresh-labelled empty bottle of Graves was the only sign of human passage. There was only room for one man to lie down—the others must have sat, or stood. Klucker told me afterwards that they felt the cold badly, especially down the front of the thighs."

Before sunset white clouds rose from below, at times blotting out the Aiguille Blanche, whose summit lay 500 feet below. Above and towards Mont Blanc the sky remained clear. Rey consulted Güssfeldt concerning these weather-signs; the latter, while expressing his readiness to continue the route at once, considered them due merely to the great heat of the valley. As night fell the mists disappeared, and there was not a breath of wind.

"All is silence about us. Silently and surely, too, the cold invades us. My men behave admirably, as one would expect from Rey and Klucker. The porter, César Ollier, too, proves himself of an endurance equal to that of his companions."

All suffered greatly from the cold, but Güssfeldt was borne up by the joyful certainty of success and

the splendid weather. At 1 a.m. Rey's voice was heard singing the "Lisette" of Béranger—their battle-cry since the winter ascent of the Grandes Jorasses.

The difficulty of the ground prevented any start before day. Each man took a little food; Güssfeldt swallowed a raw egg, all granulated with the cold. A bottle of champagne dispelled the numbing effects of the night. Towards 6 a.m. on the 16th they were off, regained the arête after half an hour at about 14,200 feet, only to find hard ice before them.

At once Rey began step-cutting. Though he had now with him a guide of his own calibre, he refused Klucker's offers of relief with the words "Oh! ce n'est pas la peine!" Between 8.30 and 9 a.m., however, Klucker relieved him. So far they had covered 700 feet in 2½ hours, and there remained some 800 feet to the summit. They turned to the left to search for a passage over the rocks; but these proved difficult owing to the change in the upper region of Mont Blanc from granite to schistose, and there was a considerable amount of glaze. Güssfeldt states that the rope caused great annoyance. After 3½ hours of climbing they were close to the summit. Klucker cut forty steps in an ice arête, and at 12.55 p.m. they stepped out on to the summit of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, to be greeted by the sound of distant gunfire. Far below, the watchers in Val Véni had seen them.

An easy arête now separated them from the summit of Mont Blanc. Other climbers were near at hand.

"On the morning of August 16th 1893," writes Mr. Kesteven, "Marshall and I with our guides left the Sella Hut to cross Mont Blanc. We had only gone about 15 minutes when a large fall of rocks occurred, which very nearly did for us. A block which must have weighed 2 or 3 cwt. came between me and the next man on the rope, and severed the rope. We bolted back to the hut as fast as possible, and waited there to see if there was any



Bottega d'Arte Alpina, Courmayeur

AIGUILLE BLANCHE DE PETERET

From near Güssfeldt's second bivouac; below in foreground, Col de Péteret; in valley below can be seen the débris of the great avalanche of November, 1920, which fell from the Col de Péteret

further fall. No great fall took place, but small stones continued to come down, and it was obviously unsafe to continue the climb by the usual route. We therefore had to find some other way, and at 5.30 a.m. we again left the hut and crossed the Mont Blanc Glacier to the foot of a rib of rock which led up to the ridge between Mont Blanc and Mont Blanc de Courmayeur.

" On nearing the ridge we heard voices which evidently came from the Italian side of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur. We had heard at Courmayeur that Güssfeldt's party had started for the Aiguille Blanche de Péteret, and we thought it must be that party. Seeing that they were coming on all right, though slowly, we walked on to the top of Mont Blanc and there awaited their arrival, to see if they did not want drink or food. We watched the party coming slowly up—Güssfeldt himself being completely done up. We waited for them and gave them some wine, and then learnt from Emile Rey that they had had nothing to eat for seventeen hours. We had nothing to do but to run down to Chamonix, so we gave them all our provisions. The stone-fall we encountered was lucky for them, as it delayed our arrival by about two hours."

Güssfeldt himself gracefully acknowledges the generosity of those who " though they have a long journey before them, hand over all their wine and provisions. These gifts are precious to us, as much in themselves as in the cordial manner of their offering."

Güssfeldt's party spent a crowded night in the Rochers Rouges Hut, and descending on the 17th by the Aiguilles Grises route reached Courmayeur at 8.50 p.m. Rey received 600 francs, Klucker 400, Ollier 250, and the porters 150.

This expedition created a great sensation in Courmayeur. When Farrar with Daniel Maquignaz a week later wished to repeat the climb,

" not a guide then there would look at it—you might as well ask him to give you his best cow. Even porters to the bivouac were hard to be got, and demanded 50 francs per man and not less than three men. . . . We heard that, on his return from the expedition, our former companion Klucker had said that had he been

with us instead of with Dr. Güssfeldt we should have got to the top the same day."

Klucker spoke little about this climb. It appears that Rey did not give him a prominent part to play, although in Güssfeldt's words "we have been able to appreciate his remarkable qualities." While rendering justice to the strenuous will and perseverance of his traveller, Klucker seems to have been somewhat out of sympathy with Güssfeldt's manner, and he formed no high opinion of his climbing powers, describing him as a cumbrous mover. To Walter Risch he talked much of his climbs, but of this his greatest feat he merely said, "Be on the look-out on the Brenva Glacier; there is no more difficulty higher up." Yet he ranked the climb as a much more serious undertaking than the traverse of the Meije. "It may well be," writes Walter Risch, "that with his exceeding modesty he purposely made no reference to this great deed. Of Rey he spoke with the greatest admiration."

CHAPTER XII

KLUCKER AND DAVIDSON

DURING eight consecutive seasons, from 1893 onwards, Klucker accompanied Sir Edward Davidson. Klucker was then in what he calls his best years; and if Davidson had by this time lost something of his earlier pace—he had been a great goer, and had been invited to join the Pilkingtons' guideless party—he was the most experienced and reliable of travellers. Living as he did a sedentary life for ten months of the year, he took some time to get into full training, but during their eight weeks' annual companionship they accomplished much. Their intercourse was of the happiest, and with his good humour and understanding of his guides' characters—he chose always only the very best of professional assistance—Davidson brought the warmth of friendship and the most absolute trust into Klucker's life; while Klucker was invaluable to him both as guide and as courier.

Elected in 1875 to the Alpine Club, of which he was President 1911–1913, from his first season's ascent of the Matterhorn when "we saw the ropes fixed by Tangwalder in the descent of '65, still hanging to the rocks," up to his 252nd ascent of the Riffelhorn in 1920, Davidson kept in the closest touch with matters Alpine; the most orthodox of mountaineers—"he was the Club incarnate," writes Farrar—not easy of access, and looking somewhat askance at certain climbing developments, he was yet keenly and sympathetically interested in the doings of younger men. When

he delivered his valedictory address in 1913 to the Alpine Club, over whose meetings he had presided with all his own dignity and grace, among the many eloquent tributes paid none met with a warmer response than did that of a young guideless climber. "The next greatest pleasure to working out a new route or ascent in the Alps," said Davidson in reply, "is to suggest a new route and watch a younger man, in whom one is interested, make it."

Klucker's *Führerbuch* contains many tributes from Davidson.

"Christian Klucker is not only a guide of quite exceptional powers, intelligence and knowledge, but a man for whose admirable qualities and character those who are fortunate enough to travel with him cannot fail to acquire the great respect and esteem. I regard him as a personal friend with whom I trust it may be my good fortune to spend part of each summer for many a year to come."

So runs the entry for 1895, a year which gave them, with Daniel Maquignaz, the first complete *Gratwanderung* over Wellenkuppe and Obergabelhorn to the Arbenjoch; the reopening after a lapse of twenty-eight years of the Galerie Carrel on the Matterhorn; the first traverse of Täschhorn and Dom from Saas Fee to Randa; while later in the season, with old Christian Almer, then nearly 70 years old, they crossed the Schmadrijoch.

On September 27th Klucker was leaving Grindelwald by the 7 a.m. train. "To his great astonishment and delight," writes Davidson, "I turned up at the station to see him off, and was pleased to find old Christian Almer had come down on purpose also and insisted on carrying his valise down for him."

In the following years Davidson had opportunity of admiring Klucker's grasp of other districts. We see



W. E. DAVIDSON

SEPP INNERKOFLER CHRISTIAN KLUCKER

1898

him guiding his party superbly through the séracs of the Matterhorn Glacier; following Sepp Innerkofler and Davidson, unroped, up Dolomite chimneys: climbing the Schmittkamin[1] on the Fünffingerspitze "knapsack and all, apparently with the greatest ease; it was just the place where his enormously strong arms tell even over Sepp": traversing Monte di Scerscen to Piz Bernina,[2] and thence over Pizzo Bianco, because he wanted to show the Scharte to Ulrich Almer, though it meant reaching Pontresina at 1.30 a.m.: cutting nearly five hundred steps on the Presanella: and passing from Staffelalp to Breuil in a twenty-hour day (Daniel Maquignaz once more with the party) over the Dent d'Hérens. The descent of the Mont Tabel Glacier had been regarded as impossible, they discovered later—"one of the most exciting adventures of my experience," writes Davidson.

The friendship between Davidson and Klucker is reflected in the late Sir Edward Davidson's own unpublished diaries, from which the following extracts are printed.

Tuesday, August 29th 1893.

We amused ourselves by taking measurements of the party, which was both curious and interesting, especially as illustrating Rey's enormous stretch of arm, and my short stretch for our respective heights—

	Stretch.	Reach.	Height.	Chest.
E. Rey .	6 ft. ½ in.	7 ft. 5¼ in.	5 ft. 8 in.	37 in.
C. Klucker .	5 ft. 6¾ in.	7 ft. 2¾ in.	5 ft. 5½ in.	39¼ in.
W. E. D. .	5 ft. 8 in.	7 ft. 5¼ in.	5 ft. 11¾ in.	38½ in.

[1] Compare Klucker's own estimate of this chimney on p. 106.

[2] On July 26th 1904, the first traverse of this ridge in the reverse direction was made by Mrs. Roberts Thomson, with Klucker and Christian Zippert. The party descended to Pontresina by the Sella Pass, the whole expedition taking twenty-six hours.

Aiguille du Grepon

Wednesday, September 19th 1894.

Started at 2.45 a.m. on a beautiful morning with A. Simond and C. Klucker for the Grépon. M. Vallot had already started for the Aiguille du Moine and another party started shortly after us for the Charmoz. They soon caught us up, and I suggested that they should go on ahead of us as they evidently wanted to go as fast as they could.

We went to the "Homme de pierres des Charmoz" in 55 minutes (3.40) and got to the glacier at 4.50 a.m., or about two hours from Montenvers to the top of the Moraine. We stopped 15 minutes on the glacier to let me eat my morning biscuit and drink a glass of lemon-kali and wine. We then went straight up the glacier, which was in better condition and safer than I had ever before seen it, arriving at the bergschrund at 7.15 a.m. We then went up the rocks and stopped at Mummery's gîte for breakfast for ¾ hour (7.30–8.15 a.m.). Thence to the point where the routes for Grépon and Charmoz diverge we took ¾ hour (9 a.m.). In the couloir leading up to the cheminée Mummery we found a good deal of snow and we took ½ hour to get up it. The other party, who were breakfasting on some rocks just under the top of the Charmoz, shouted to us and begged us not to proceed, but there was not the least danger. At the gap (9.30 a.m.) the guides unroped me, and I was left to look after Simond's rope, which was put round a strong stone while he attempted to traverse on Klucker's shoulders and ice-axe into the cheminée. This cheminée is reached by a downward traverse from the gap itself of not more than 40 feet. The first 15 feet of the cheminée which the traverse avoids were glazed with *verglas* and are much the most difficult part of the chimney, which in all is about 45 feet high—the first 15 feet being very difficult—the second 15 feet (where Mummery was photographed) being difficult but quite climbable, and the last 15 feet being much easier. There are good halting-places at the end of each 15 feet, and once the first 15 feet are accomplished, I think any really good rock-climber who is strong in the arms ought to be able to accomplish it. But the place is a *sehr exponirte Stelle* and one must be absolutely free from the *sensation du vide*. It is certainly not so difficult as Klucker's route through the gap. However on this occasion, Simond having had two tries at the traverse which were

defeated by the snow and *verglas* on the rocks, was obliged to descend to the foot of the chimney, which after a hard struggle he succeeded in vanquishing. Once up the first 15 feet he shouted as he rested panting to regain his breath 'La cheminée est à nous," and I felt that we were now committed absolutely to the rest of the climb. It was a magnificent exhibition on Simond's part, and I doubt whether any other living rock-climber would have dared and accomplished the first 15 feet in safety under such conditions. After him Klucker ascended on the rope, and this was then thrown down to me with strict injunctions to tie myself up securely, which I naturally did. Aided by the rope from above I made the traverse, thus avoiding the worst 15 feet, but it would have been absolutely impossible for anybody to make the traverse without the aid of a rope from above, as all the grips—such as there were—were filled with snow, and there was also a little *verglas* over the rock. The last ⅔ of the cheminée I did not think so extremely hard. Simond vanquished the cheminée at 10.15 a.m., and we were all up at 10.30. We then went through the curious hole so well seen in Holmes' big photograph and got on to the Mer de Glace side, and after a short upward traverse proceeded straight upwards towards the foot of the first peak, which has a couple of stones on the summit. There was a great deal of snow just here, and I found this bit the most difficult and fatiguing on the whole mountain, although Simond assured me that when there was no snow it was quite easy. Arrived at the foot of the peak (10.50 a.m.) we traversed on the Chamonix side *à cheval* up a long, very sharp and very steep fin of rock, which landed us in a comparatively comfortable spot on the other (south) side of the first peak. When on the fin of rock we had a sheer precipice on the right-hand side, and a narrow crack about 10 inches to a foot wide and of considerable depth between us and the side of the peak. We stopped 10 minutes after overcoming this obstacle, and left again at 11.10 a.m. At 11.20 we arrived at the point of rock at the top of the deep gap down which it is necessary to descend on a fixed rope or ropes. Here for the first 20 feet one goes *rittlings* on a very sharp edge of rock and finally for the next 20 feet down a steep rock face with no hold at all on to a species of embrasure. We all got down to this point at 11.40 a.m. Thence we crossed round a corner of rock (said to be difficult though I didn't find it so at all) on to what is known as the "grande route." This is

a broad and level ledge of rock on the Mer de Glace side, ending in a place on which one could easily pass the night *en bivouac*. The snow lay thick (about 10 inches deep) on this level place, as indeed it did almost anywhere where there was any possibility for it to stick. However, over almost the whole of our route there was no place for even a grain of snow to rest for more than an hour or two—or indeed for ice to form from its melting. Almost immediately afterwards we emerged again on the Chamonix side at the foot of the final peak (some 15 or 20 feet above us), and here we were received by salvoes of cannon from the valley below. It was just 12 o'clock. Now Simond mounting on Klucker's shoulders proceeded to the summit up a crack which landed him on the southern side of the big *bloc perché* so well seen from Chamonix. It was 12.10 p.m. when I reached the top, and Klucker followed in a few minutes.

The way taken by Simond was the obvious way of ascending the highest point, and I do not understand why Venetz on the first occasion, or François Simond on the second ascent, did not follow it. However, they both ascended over the *bloc perché* direct from N. to S. which they naturally found very difficult, as it overhangs and juts out against the would-be climber from this side.

We remained on the actual top about 10 minutes and then descended to the foot of the point, where we stopped for 50 minutes.

Descent.

Left at 1.10, and in three or four steps to the left hand came upon a large stone round which a rope was hanging. About three feet above and more to the left of this stone was a piton securely driven into a crack in the rock. (We removed the rope from the stone: it had been left there by Perren, who led young Claud Schuster and Grogan, in the descent, as it appears he was unable to find the piton.) We then took our extra rope, which was 80 feet long, and ran it doubled through the piton, but the 40 feet thus depending was not quite long enough to reach the foot of the " mauvais pas " (which Simond called " Le Cheval "), and so we tied the other rope on to it. This rope was about 30 feet long, and the extra 15 feet were more than enough to reach good footing below the " cheval." A rope of 50 feet, or a doubled rope of 100 feet is really necessary to pass this place, as the " cheval " is at the foot of it and there is nowhere whereon to

fasten a rope firmly below the rock and piton above-mentioned. The upper part of the " mauvais pas " is a very steep crack or fissure, but it can be managed without an extra rope: the last 10 or 15 feet however (Le Cheval) cannot be either ascended or descended without a rope fixed somewhere above. On the left (descending) of the fissure, and on a rock rib some 10 or more feet above Le Cheval was a small *saillie* of rock projecting almost horizontally, and over this *saillie* it is necessary when ascending from the Col de Blaitière to throw the rope. This is done from above, and is a very delicate and difficult operation. When the rope has " caught on " the first man mounts with its aid on to the cheval, and then he is able to reach the piton at the top of the crack and to fix the *corde supplémentaire* for the others. François Simond has accomplished this operation on two occasions (1) with Dunod and (2) with Wicks, but on the third occasion he failed and the expedition had to be abandoned.

Alfred Simond told me that he was very unwilling to try and place the cord again—that he had done it twice, and that it was extremely difficult and not very safe; but that of course when once the cord was placed and the first man had climbed up to the piton the rest was very easy. In fact this is the only really *very* hard piece upon the Dunod route; the rest being quite climbable by an ordinarily good goer. As a whole this route does not compare for a moment with the Venetz–Mummery route, and if a couple of iron stanchions were fixed immediately under the cheval, or a permanent rope hung there, the mountain would from this side be within the reach of most good rock-climbing guides instead of being confined to only one or two—in fact to the two Simonds (François and Alfred) who alone have *placé la corde* successfully.

When we had all descended to below the cheval it was 1.40 p.m., and on attempting to pull the rope through the piton it got wedged in the crack and resisted all our efforts. Klucker accordingly attempted to climb on to the cheval and to disentangle it, but after three efforts much to his disgust he failed and had to give it up. He had sprained his right hand and wrist somewhat in helping Simond up the Mummery cheminée, and was not consequently up to his usual form. He was of course frightfully chagrined.

Simond naturally would not hear of leaving the rope, and took off his coat, and very soon was on top of the cheval, sitting

astride of which he was enabled to disentangle the rope and pull it through the piton ring. This all naturally took time, and we did not proceed again until 2.10 p.m. Next we went up an easy couloir of about 20–30 feet in height to the Col Balfour, a gap on the south ridge between the Pic Balfour and the rocks of the final summit.

We now traversed under the foot of the Pic Balfour, and at 2.25 p.m. arrived at the second piton, which is fixed at the top of a rock wall seamed by a narrow crack running vertically down it. Here an extra rope was not absolutely necessary, but the piton being there we used it. Then came a traverse of short extent, then a descent *à cheval* over a rock point into a gap, and thence an ascent up a rock wall not more than 10 feet above the gap to the C.P. platform. It is stated in Kurz's guide that a rope should on the ascent by this route be placed to facilitate the return; but this is quite unnecessary. Simond got up the wall with the greatest ease by the simple expedient of putting his axe to lean against it and then standing on the top of it.

We got to "C.P." at 3.5 p.m., or in 1 hour 55 minutes from the top. Of this time however nearly half an hour was lost in efforts to detach the rope from the first or upper piton. The time of 1 hour given in Kurz from the top to "C.P." is evidently a "record" one, while 2 hours 20 minutes from "C.P." to Montenvers even under favourable conditions is extraordinarily fast. (We took 3 hours 35 minutes actual walking, and knocking off 35 minutes for the delay of going by lantern-light it was about equal to 3 hours.)

We stopped here 5 minutes to roll up the *corde supplémentaire*, and at 3.10 p.m. went on again, reaching the edge of the snow a little above the Col de Blaitière at 3.45 p.m. Here we stopped for 20 minutes to eat and drink. At 4.5 p.m. we started, and 55 minutes afterwards unroped at the foot of the glacier. At first we had to cut steps in ice for some little way across and down the slope towards the Col de Blaitière, but afterwards we found good snow and were able to get on fast. The glacier was in a better and *safer* condition than I had ever before seen it: there were *no* overhanging séracs and no débris below; it was therefore quite unnecessary to ascend or descend by the "rocher de Blaitière," and we saved some time in consequence. When we unroped we stopped again for 20 minutes from 5 to 5.20 p.m., and then went on to Montenvers without stopping, except 5

minutes to light the lantern at 6.50 p.m. For some little time previously we had been stumbling about over the boulders between the "homme de pierre" on the Charmoz, as it had got absolutely dark.

At exactly 7.20 p.m. we got to Montenvers. Young Pollinger came out with a lantern bringing Alfred Simond's little son with him to meet us. It appeared that the little boy, who is devoted to his father, had been greatly distressed when his father didn't return before dark; that they had invited him to supper to "divert his mind," but that he had declined to eat and had stopped outside the hotel steadily watching the Pointe des Charmoz for our appearance.

The whole expedition from first to last went through without the slightest hitch or failure on anybody's part. The climb is certainly the most difficult I have ever done, but it is not extremely long. We had it under rather difficult conditions, but even so it seemed less difficult than I had expected from previous accounts. There was no single place on the mountain when I had the slightest anxiety, or otherwise than thoroughly enjoyed myself—when once the Mummery cheminée was climbed—and there I was not afraid of any mishap, but simply lest the *verglas* would prevent even Simond getting up it. I am also quite certain that both guides were perfectly easy in their minds as to my own and their capacity to carry through the expedition in absolute safety. The final ridge is no doubt tremendously exposed, and a slip, if at all serious, anywhere would be fatal to the whole party, and the mountain is certainly not one to be undertaken by any but extremely careful and deliberate climbers. Simond climbed magnificently, and with a grace, ease and elegance which I hardly recollect to have seen equalled. Klucker very generously said of him that he was the best rock-climber he had ever seen, bar no one, though Daniel Maquignaz at his best "Kommt ihm sehr wenig nach." Simond has now ascended the mountain five times, and is one of the very few guides who have ever *led* an expedition by the Mummery route, or in traversing the mountain. The others are Venetz, Klucker, the younger Maître of Evolena, and Perren of Zermatt. The second guide in the ascent has of course nothing to do except to climb, as far as possible, without having to be hauled on the rope. In the descent Klucker came last, and was admirable as usual. The two guides went splendidly together, and curiously

enough they are exactly the same age (42), while I am in my 42nd year!

Tuesday, September 24th 1895.

. . . From the very head of the Gasterental we were most persistently followed by a young and solitary goat, which we could not get rid of, although we hurled stones and sticks at it and endeavoured to drive it back by the most violent measures. At last Klucker, who had long been addressing it as "Du verfluchter Satan," became so indignant that he began to dispute the passage of the path with the animal in earnest, and took off his knapsack and coat for the purpose of securing freedom of movement sufficient to cope with the agility displayed by his antagonist. For half an hour he chivied the animal here, there and everywhere with the most indifferent success, and finally only vanquished him by stratagem. A bridge led over the Kander torrent to a sort of island between the main and the various secondary channels of the stream; this bridge was guarded by a wooden gate. Having carefully set this gate open, and having placed me as a "stop" lower down on the path, Klucker succeeded in chasing his enemy on to the bridge and through the gate on to the island. He then shut the gate and left the goat *planté là*. I rather hoped the beast would try to jump the gate, but apparently Klucker's knowledge of the habits of the capral tribe was sound, for he told me it was quite certain that the goat wouldn't attempt either to jump the gate, or to swim the stream (wherein he would certainly have been drowned) except under the compulsion of hunger or love.

Monday, September 27th 1897. (DESCENDING THE EURINGER-SPITZE.)

. . . While we were standing on this plateau, Klucker had a very narrow escape of being killed by a falling stone which was dislodged—undoubtedly by a hawk perching on the rocks above. It was half as big as a man's fist, and fell at least 300 feet, hitting him a tremendous blow on the nape of the neck and bounding off him into space. I heard the whirr and turned round just in time to see it hit him, as did Sepp. We both rushed at him, expecting to see him knocked down, and seized him as he was half tottering. By the greatest good fortune however the stone hit him below the skull and to the right of his backbone, where a coating of thick muscle as well as his coat collar protected him, and he

wasn't really hurt at all, though the blow was a very severe one and made quite a loud thud as it fell on him. Had he been hit on the head his skull must surely have been fractured. It was the narrowest escape I have ever seen, and a most extraordinary incident. The chances against a man being hit in such a way must be several millions to one, I should imagine. It was an immense relief as I clutched his shoulder, fully expecting to find him dropping stunned into my arms, to find that my old friend was not hurt.

Wednesday, September 5th 1900. DENT D'HÉRENS.

The descent of the icefall of the Mont Tabel Glacier proved a work of great difficulty and also of some danger, as we were obliged to pass under some tremendous hanging séracs in the middle of the glacier in order to get down. It took us 2 hours 10 minutes of hard work before we stood on the first stones of the moraine at 7.45, just as daylight gave out and the moon became our only aid. . . .

From the summit to the Col des Grandes Murailles we took 1 hour 20 minutes, and thence to Giomein 5 hours 40 minutes, of which 5 hours were actual walking. From the summit to Giomein moreover we went remarkably well.

Daniel made a considerable mistake as to the route up the Dent d'Hérens, which would have been far shorter and easier had we ascended by the S.E. ice slope, rocks, and E. arête instead of by the S.W. and S. ridge. Moreover we took the wrong route up the S. ridge to commence with, as we were on a ridge to the left (ascending) instead of to the right of a large couloir, and consequently had to cross this couloir rather high up and to traverse some very difficult rocks before we landed ourselves high up on the ridge to the right of the couloir, which ridge ran into the summit ridge about 20 to 30 feet to the right (ascending) of the summit.

No mountaineer was ever better served by his guides than was Davidson. His words to the Alpine Club, in honour of Daniel Maquignaz, show how he valued their skill and their friendship.

"With the exception of Captain Farrar," he says, "I think I have been more than any other member of our Club with Daniel Maquignaz, and I feel that if I do not pay some small tribute to

the memory of this great mountaineer—certainly the first Italian guide of his generation, a most worthy successor to his uncle and to Jean Antoine Carrel, a man recognized for years past on the Italian side of the Matterhorn as the leading spirit of the valley—I should be failing in what is due to a very old friend and to a very remarkable personality, and one of the greatest rock-climbers ever known. I recollect that Christian Klucker, who was an extremely fine cragsman himself, and if a rather severe certainly a most competent critic, once said to me (it was, I believe, in 1894, after we three had ascended the Grépon together, under very difficult conditions) that Alfred Simond was, he thought, the best granite rock climber he knew, and then added, 'Aber Daniel kommt ihm sehr, sehr wenig nach'—a most generous and just testimonial from one great guide to another of different race. On crevassed snowfields or in a complicated icefall Daniel was like a well-bred hound, the typical 'bon chien qui chassait de race.' He had, as Monsieur Loppé once happily expressed it, 'le vrai instinct des glaciers.' He was perhaps not quite such a great step-cutter as some few others, but taken all in all he was a great master of his craft who has been scarcely, if ever, surpassed."

And Captain Farrar records how Daniel Maquignaz led for nearly twenty hours of ascent over the Péteret arête in 1893, with many hours of step-cutting in half a gale of wind; at midnight they found some shelter on the summit of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, "but not before Maquignaz's deft hand had secured the rope round a projecting rock."

(From the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 25.)

Sepp Innerkofler, Davidson's companion in the Dolomites, met a death as honourable as his life had been. This is recorded in the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 37, in these words:

"In his Dolomites he had only one possible rival, Toni Dimai. None of us who have climbed with him will forget his grace of movement on difficult rocks or his frank and honest ways.

"Sepp was 50 when the war with Italy broke out, but joined

up with his sons Gottfried (aged 22) and Sepp (aged 18), and was stationed on the Sexten Plateau front where, of course, he knew every stone. Many tales are told of his gallant behaviour. In the early days the Paternkofel, next to the Drei Zinnen, had been used as an observation post by the Austrians, but early in June 1915 an Italian patrol occupied, and built an entrenchment of stones on, the summit. The post was too valuable to surrender, and Sepp, who, by this time, had been advanced to *Ober-Jäger*, volunteered to dislodge the Italian garrison whom he put at six or eight men. He proposed to ascend by the N.N.W. arête (of which he had made the first ascent in 1896) with five other guides and his son Gottfried. The climb ends in a nearly vertical chimney finishing a few feet below the summit, so it was hoped to surprise the Italian post. The attack was arranged for the night of July 3rd–4th, but in view of the risk young Gottfried was forbidden to go. The attack was to be covered by a barrage from a battery on the Dreizinnen plateau and Sepp carried a flag to signal the battery when to lift. The party duly left at 2 a.m., and everything went according to plan. At 9 a.m. Sepp, followed by another guide, appeared just under the summit plateau. The barrage promptly stopped. Sepp, followed by the other men, was seen to dash forward and to throw three or four hand grenades. He was met by ten or twelve Italians from behind their stone wall. Suddenly the attackers threw themselves to the ground while the defenders retired behind their wall. It appeared that an Austrian machine gun on the Innicher Riedl had opened fire. Immediately it stopped three or four Italians dashed out once more, including a gigantic Alpino. Sepp sprang to his feet but was instantly shot by the latter, threw up his hands, and fell backwards over the edge, his body lodging in the Opelkamin some 25 feet down. The other guides instantly retired, descending the rocks at their utmost speed, all but one escaping unhurt although pelted with rocks by the Italians who had put up so staunch a defence.

" Sepp's body was recovered by the Italians and buried, it is stated with military honours, on the summit, the offer of his companions to rescue it in the night being deemed too risky.

" The other guides reported that Sepp threw four bombs of which only the third exploded, and that he was shot dead through the head.

" On August 17th 1918, when the summit was reoccupied the

two sons and a patrol in command of an officer made the ascent and found the grave marked with a cross bearing Sepp's name. The body had been buried wrapped in an Italian patrol tent, and was quite recognizable. He was reinterred in the family grave at Sexten."

CHAPTER XIII

KLUCKER AND FARRAR

"Mein Unfehlbarer"

THAT his close friendship with Captain Farrar meant much to Klucker, is abundantly shown in his letters. In each man lay a deep love of mountains, the scholar's enthusiasm for Alpine history in its minutest details, and the ever-ready wish to help the younger generation. But while Klucker kept the closest written record of his climbs, Farrar carried almost all his amazing Alpine knowledge in his head, and his note-books give but the scantiest record of his achievements.

Farrar's study of mountain conditions was as thorough as Klucker's; bold climber as he was, he was pre-eminently a safe mountaineer. "He treated the mountains with respect," writes Professor Gask, "for, as he said, they never forgave a mistake." His endurance was phenomenal; one day in the Graians, with Daniel Maquignaz, he traversed the whole ridge northward from the Grand Paradis to the Col de l'Herbetet. "Il faut profiter du beau temps," remarked Maquignaz.

His climbing career covers nearly fifty years, during which he was President of the Alpine Club from 1917 to 1919, and for many years he was closely associated with the *Alpine Journal*, to whose pages he added a personal touch that brought home to all readers the essential fellowship among mountaineers.

Warm-hearted and generous, he could, like Klucker,

be very outspoken. "I hadn't been climbing a minute on Lliwedd," said the young George Mallory, most brilliant of Welsh rock-climbers, "before he called me a damned fool." Yet there was none to whom the younger climbers turned with greater confidence than to Farrar.

The year 1893 was his *annus mirabilis*—"Daniel Maquignaz, Christian Klucker and I, then in our best years, lean and fit as dog-wolves." His first entry in Klucker's *Führerbuch* runs:

C. Klucker was my guide for a month ending 9th August, during which we made the following expeditions:
Southern Aiguille d'Arves.[1]
Traverse of the Meije from La Grave to La Bérarde in one day.
Col de la Temple.
Traverse of Mont Blanc (ascent by Brenva Glacier).
Traverse of Aiguille du Grépon.
Grand Dru.
For judgment, care and climbing powers I consider him unsurpassed—certainly I never saw his better.

MONTENVERS, *9th August* 1893.

J. P. FARRAR.

Klucker gives details of their traverse of the Meije on July 19th (*Die Alpen*, 1925). "Left La Grave 12.30 a.m. Grand Pic 12 noon. Descent begun 1 p.m. Châtelleret (no use of doubled rope) a little before 8 p.m. La Bérarde 10.5 p.m." He adds, "It is true, my companion that day was called Farrar."

The following letter to Dr. Jenny is characteristic of Klucker. He had given the impression that his party descended into the Brèche Zsigmondy by using the Zsigmondy rope. In *Die Alpen*, 1925, he records that in addition to a rotted rope-ring, they found hanging on it a piece of Manila rope 25 feet long.

[1] See letter to Captain Farrar, August 24th 1928, p. 269.



"ALTER BERGFREUND FARRAR"

These were eventually sent, not to Zsigmondy, but to Purtscheller.

Fextal, April 24th 1925.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—

As you will see from the enclosures, age does not always protect one from follies, and my honoured *Bergfreund* Farrar knocks out my infallibility this time with the words, "a wrong route at last!"

The matter is unpleasant and annoying for me, especially as I must once more bother our honoured editor of the monthly journal. Had I known Herr Frey and his address, I would have written personally to him and cleared up the affair.

My misconception arose from the circumstance that Mr. Farrar, who was descending first, called up to me: "Here is a piton and a long piece of rope. I am putting them in my rucksack." Thereupon I climbed down the small drop to him. When I was steadying him down on the rope, or rather was about to descend on a doubled rope, I noticed, not without anxiety, that much more than the half of our rope's length was needed. When I called down to this effect, the answer came up: "I can lengthen our rope a few metres with Zsigmondy's rope-ring or piece of rope." Down in the Brèche, I merely noticed that Mr. Farrar was putting a piece of half-rotted rope in his rucksack with the words: "I'll take this with me and send it to Dr. Otto Zsigmondy." This was the origin of the remark in my notes, which I always wrote up the day after the climb, "longish piece of rope." I consider this confusion of mine as necessary to clear your mind.

Herr Frey also assumes that the Gibson-Almer party were the first to carry out the ascent of the

doubled-rope place by the Brèche Zsigmondy. As far as I know, and according to Mr. Farrar's statements, Almer found in 1891 an easier variation, leading up to the north of the Tour Zsigmondy. Mr. Farrar wanted to follow this variation with me in 1893 for getting down into the Brèche. The fresh snow which had fallen shortly before prevented us.

So much for to-day about the Brèche Zsigmondy. As I have already said, the matter is uncommonly annoying for me, and I have no other way out of it than to put my correction in No. 4 of the monthly journal.

If this self-impeachment of mine can be published, I gladly leave it to my honoured friend Ernst to clothe it in pleasant form.

Many heartfelt greetings to yourself and your dear ones at home.

Your old
CHR. KLUCKER.

Mont Blanc from the Brenva Glacier

On this ascent in 1893 (July 26th), Farrar was accompanied by Daniel Maquignaz as well as Klucker. The following account of it is given in the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 26.

"This ascent took from the bivouac on the rock island in the Brenva Glacier 11 hrs. 40 mins., or from the foot of the buttress 9 hrs. 40 mins. (including 1 hr. 55 mins. halts) to the main N.E. arête of Mont Blanc (10 mins., from the Rochers Rouges Hut). It involved the most continuously heavy step-cutting in hard steep ice I have ever seen. The two guides were then at the zenith of their great powers. For long stretches the ice was so hard as to require thirty-five to forty axe strokes per step, and the slope was such that, forced to keep close together to prevent being struck by the chunks of ice from the step-cutting, I had to be very careful to avoid being kicked in the

face as the leader moved his foot to advance. Short stretches of ice of the colour of plaster of Paris were encountered, so tough and unbrittle that the axe-head simply stuck in them without bringing anything away. I have never seen such ice elsewhere. The famous ice arête was exactly as described by Mr. Moore. From above it we traversed steep ice slopes towards the summit with a great line of square-cut ice-cliffs above us on our left. We finally got through a rift in the ice-cliffs out on to the easy slopes below the Petits Rochers Rouges. We wore no crampons in those days, but even with them the ice was such as would have certainly demanded much labour. We took from the Rochers Rouges Hut to the summit 52 mins., and 18 mins. for the return, and slept there (very bad weather came on). This face is pretty certain to mean very hard work indeed for the leaders, and the others must be perfectly safe in steep ice-steps and should be able to relieve the leader of any load. No doubt the conditions may vary somewhat, but the expedition will, for the men who do the work, be always an arduous one."

To this may be added Klucker's own notes, taken from his letter to Farrar of June 24th 1928:

"Left the bivouac place (according to my not infallible watch) 3.25 a.m. Descent over rocks and a small tributary glacier to the upper Brenva Glacier, crossing it to a col on the buttress of the Brenva face. From the col, after crossing a snow arête, over rocky points to the left up to the foot of a crumbling rock-point in the ridge. Short halt. (It is possible that during this halt, while resting on the rocks, we left a bottle—certainly not Daniel's *Schnapsbüterli*—for as I know we did not halt again on rocks.) From the halting-place we crossed upward to the left to a long snow-couloir, left it half-way up on the left, above a smooth rock drop, then went straight up mostly over steep snow to a fairly long ice arête, which abuts against the broad upper Brenva ice-wall. Short halt (you mention 8.30–8.45). After the halt, endless cutting up the steep ice-wall to the snow ridge of Mont Blanc, somewhat higher than the Mur de la Côte."

During this climb Klucker suffered much from an internal chill, the result of the cold and damp of the bivouac following after the heat of Turin. "In Fred.

Payot's hutch black coffee was served, and as a convalescent I had a strong portion of Cognac in my cup!"

Writing to Herr Marcel Kurz on April 11th 1926 concerning the Grépon, Klucker says:

"My first ascent of the Grépon, with the turning of the Mummery Crack, took place on August 6th 1893, with Captain J. P. Farrar and Daniel Maquignaz.

"You are no doubt familiar with the Grépon and its superb climbing, and thus know the couloir which runs up steeply from the Nantillons Glacier to the gap between Grands Charmoz and Grépon. And you will be further aware that just a few yards to the west of this narrow gap is to be found the starting-point of the ascent towards the Mummery Crack on the right. On account of the icy condition of the rocks, we had to give up the entry into the Mummery Crack on that August 6th, and I looked therefore for another point of attack. I found it after we had crept through the narrow gap to the east, on the Trélaporte side. Directly beyond the gap (or only a few yards from it) and at the uppermost end of the great couloir running up from the small Trélaporte Glacier, is a large, steep slab. To the right of this slab I came to a narrow rock ledge at about the level of my head, and from there I climbed by a steep and difficult climb up a poorly defined rock gully with little hold to the Grépon north ridge, which was reached through the so-called Loch, where those who use the Mummery route crawl through on to the arête.

"The clambering stretch, from the slab below up to the Loch, may be 100 feet high. Pitons were not used, for we carried none with us on our tours.

"According to the testimony of Captain Farrar, this compulsory variation of ours was not new. They say that a few years before us an Englishman [1] had climbed up with Hans and Ulrich Almer, in fact before Mummery had discovered his crack. The Almers, however, did not get to the highest peak of the Grépon, because for lack of spare rope they were unable to cross the deep gap between the two peaks.

[1] Sir George Morse, in 1889. Mummery's ascent took place in August 1881.

"That Hans Almer was able to get over the difficult place above the slab does not surprise me. He was considered in those days to be one of the very best rock-climbers. I am sorry that I have no dates for this Almer-Grépon climb. A year later on September 19th, I passed through the Mummery Crack for the first time, finding it easier than our variation of 1893."

In 1894 they were together once more, and in concluding the record of their climbs, Farrar wrote in Klucker's *Führerbuch*:

"Klucker stands in my opinion in the very front rank of his profession. I have never seen his better, and in some, indeed in many, respects I do not know his equal."

On July 16th they covered a remarkable stretch of ground; the details given are a typical staccato entry in Farrar's pocket-books:

DISGRAZIA

Left Forno Hut 1.25 *a.m.*
Top Monte Sissone 4.20–27 *a.m.*
Breakfast on slope overlooking Val di Mello 5.20–35.
Ridge overlooking Chiareggio 7.16–7.20.
Cut from here up arête.
Top 9.8 *a.m.*
Left 9.55.
On arête overlooking Chiareggio 10.40.
Fuorcla di Pioda 11.50.
Left noon.
Lunch 1–1.30 *p.m.*
Struck Muretto path 4.40–45.
Top Muretto Pass 5.54 *p.m.*
Halt 6.45–7.0 *p.m. at bridge over Forno stream.*
Maloja 8–8.10.
Sils 9.20 *p.m.*

On the summit of the Crast' Agüzza, July 21st, Farrar found Güssfeldt's card: "Landed 19 Aug. 1875, 11.18 a.m. at Liverpool from the Equator, coming from Africa; 19 Sept. 1875 at same hour

reached summit of Crast' Agüzza, i.e. 31 times 24 hours later. Viva Hans Grass."

It was not until 1925 that the two climbed again together. Klucker was delighted at the prospect. "It would give me the greatest pleasure to see our dear *Bergfreund* once more among us," he writes to Farrar. "And I should be equally pleased for you to bring young Maquignaz[1] with you." Their reunion was the more welcome to Klucker in that it took place among those peaks which for ever hold his name. That autumn Farrar wrote in the *Führerbuch*:

"I was much pleased that my good old friend Klucker (mein Unfehlbarer!) was able to accompany me once more after memorable years 1893–4. Bad weather interfered with our plans, but we did Ago di Sciora, Forcella di Bondo, Piz Badile, Bocchetta Trubinasca and Passo Porcellizzo.

"To my mind he is as good as ever—a great master—there has been no better mountaineer. He will go down in Alpine history as practically without a rival for supreme knowledge of a mountain, never-failing care, executive ability, and a sterling character that makes him a charming companion.

"Auf Wiedersehen!

"J. P. FARRAR,
"Past President Alpine Club.
"Hon. Member S.A.C.

"LONDON, *October* 1925."

In a letter to Herr Fritz Sulzberger, Klucker relates that he managed to lead "the 68-year-old champion up the Ago di Sciora, which he regarded as just as difficult as the Petit Dru, and even classed with the Grépon." To Herr Rutter he writes, immediately after parting with "this beloved man":

"I spent thirteen delightful days with my dear old *Bergfreund* Farrar. The weather however and the quantity of fresh snow

[1] Camille Maquignaz, son of Daniel.

spoilt much for us. My elderly employer of 68 years suited me very well, for he goes slowly and has somewhat calmed down. Association with him is pleasant and friendly.

"From the Albigna Hut we were lucky to get the Ago di Sciora, in bad snow-conditions on the first rock-bands. In spite of the fact that the young Almer was with us, they gladly let me lead. From the Sciora Hut we crossed the Forcella di Bondo to the Badile Hut—we found the Bondasca Glacier in very good condition—and then went up Piz Badile by the ordinary way. There was still too much snow on the west and east ridges. From the Badile Hut we ended by crossing the Porcellizzo and Trubinasca passes, with descent to the splendid Sass Fura, the joy of my heart! We reached Promontogno in the evening, where we parted yesterday."

There remains only to add certain letters, which show that the advancing years brought no break, but rather a closer binding to this friendship.

Fex, December 12th 1911.

DEAR OLD FRIEND FARRAR,—

This time I cannot answer your kind letter of November 13th with any claim to "infallibility." The "infallible" person is punctual!

The reason I've kept you waiting so long is that I was unable to find the photograph of the Crast' Agüzza which was handed to me in the Alpine garden last summer. I wrote again to Dr. Corti at Bologna, to whom I had written previously about the absence of any reference to our expedition in his *Guida dei Monti d'Italia.* But his answer was in the negative. Yesterday I once more turned everything inside out, even the books in my library, and sure enough, the tiny thing came to light between the pages of a dictionary of Alpine flora! I cannot understand how it got there, as I never used the book in the Alpine garden.[1]

[1] The Alpine Garden referred to on p. 193.

But—be that as it may, it has been found, and all I can do is to offer to my old friend Farrar my sincere apologies for the tiresome, unavoidable delay.

Now as to the indicated Crast' Agüzza route, it is for the most part identical with ours. On September 3rd of this year two friends and I ascended the Crast' Agüzza once again from this side. The only thing was that owing to pronounced danger from falling stones we were driven further to the left in the upper half, so that we had to get on to the main ridge a little earlier. From a photograph I had taken with me (which I also enclose) I had to conclude that it was not possible to ascend the wall more to the right, the rocks to the right of the dotted line being practically vertical and unclimbable. In the middle of the wall is the " Corti " route, also probably dotted in too far to the right, and I have indicated the spot in red ink. Therefore: It may be assumed that our ascent of July 21st 1894, and the published descent of Dr. Corti of August 1906, are identical in the main.

Dr. Corti makes the excuse that he had had no knowledge of our ascent—it had not been published anywhere. But I am almost certain that I told him of our ascent in Tresivio on December 28th 1910, when we discussed the most important new routes for his *Guida*. Besides, he had promised me verbally and in writing that he would send me the manuscripts for perusal, and if need be for correction. This was not done, however!

An " Italian Club Hut " will probably be built on the Crast' Agüzza Saddle next summer. I have been asked to attend to the preliminaries, and if possible to undertake also the supervision of the building work. The plans are under way, and unless the project is too expensive, the erection of the hut will be carried out.

The transport, which would either have to go over the Sella Pass or would have to follow the customary Bernina route from Boval, is however likely to be difficult and very costly. By Christmas this matter will have been cleared up.

I am pretty well, my dear Mr. Farrar, and I think that heart and lungs would be good for a few more attractive tours! I found on September 3rd that I could more than hold my own with my thirty- and thirty-five-year-old companions! Thus your so-called "Unfehlbar" is personally and physically in good form. On the other hand my domestic circumstances are pretty sad, and if it were not for my strong nerves and a mind not easily upset, my life would be miserable. In the month of May I lost the younger of my two sisters. She was the one who kept house for me. I have now only the elder one, a cripple of 74, and my niece. The latter had to take my dead sister's place in the household and attend to the Fex Post Office at the same time. At first things went pretty well. In August, however, there began to be signs of a serious nervous disorder, and all treatment seems unavailing.

Wistful memory turns back to the happy days I spent with dear friends in our beautiful mountains—and now?—I dare not think of it.

You will kindly excuse this long rambling letter, but it seemed right that my old friend should know the dark side of my life also.

I will end now, in the steadfast hope of seeing you again, and trusting that you may continue to keep the same encouraging regard and attachment for your old Fex friend.

In true gratitude,

CHR. KLUCKER.

Sils-Fex, February 18th 1920.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED HERR FARRAR,—

You probably had not and have not now any idea of the joy you gave me by your kind letter of the 10th inst. It awakened lively memories of former happy days and of the dear people, whom I was permitted to accompany on so many tours. It may be useless, or shall we say superfluous, to stress the fact, that you hold the place of honour in my reminiscences. And should the "Memoirs," which my Alpine friends urge me to compose, ever see the light of day, you will see from them that your old "Infallible" can be grateful to true, kind and simple men with whom it has been his privilege to associate.

And now about your question concerning the route we took with Mrs. Thomson on the Lyskamm, west peak, in August 1902. Your assumption is quite correct! We kept where the slope showed good snow or *Firn*; i.e. to the right of the rocky slope, only touching the rock higher up. This ascent does not really present any undue difficulties. On the other hand the stretch below the ice-cliff was doubtful, and for a good quarter of an hour dangerous. If I am not mistaken, it took us from the start (lower part of the Zwillings Glacier) up to the Lyskamm west peak about 4½ hours, and 6 hours from the Bétemps Hut. For the descent we chose the Felikjoch.

Our last meeting took place in the Alpine garden near Sils Maria! I was as happy as a child then, and should be happier still to be able to greet the esteemed President of the Alpine Club in the near future in our Alps. From 1906 to 1917 I was obliged to give up climbing almost entirely owing to skin trouble on my face, and also on account of communal duties. But since 1917 I have started again, and find that—especi-

ally on rocks—I can still hold my own very well. In the autumn of 1917 and in the summers of 1918 and 1919 I carried out with friends and acquaintances the most difficult scrambles in the Bregaglia mountains, among these Cima del Largo twice, Punta Rasica, Ago di Sciora three times, Il Gallo twice, etc. And for next summer also I have many plans ; the late August programme contains even Zermatt and the Matterhorn ! The great thing now is that my health should remain sound. I have hopes that it will—notwithstanding my 66 years, and the critical condition of invalid members of my family, which causes me great anxiety and sorrow.

Since the outbreak of the terrible World War (may it be the last of its kind) I have had no news of any sort from my good friends and acquaintances in England, not even from Sir Davidson, who used never to forget me at Christmas time. You, my dear Mr. Farrar, are now a welcome exception, for which I am sincerely grateful.

I am glad to know that you are in good health. Whether your strength would yet be equal to the Aiguille Blanche de Péteret, I am unable to judge, though I feel inclined to think so.

I often recall this Aiguille Blanche, and also our Brenva ascent of Mont Blanc on July 26th 1893. During our ascent on July 25th to the Brenva bivouac, opposite the east face of the Aiguille Blanche, we both concluded that it would be possible to climb this ill-famed Aiguille from this side, and I intended to propose to you at that time to look for a bivouac for the Aiguille Blanche instead of for the Brenva ice-wall. But I said nothing, and in the night of July 26th to 27th, in Fr. Payot's hut on the Rochers Rouges, I was profoundly thankful in view of the prevailing

snowstorm that we had not aimed at the Aiguille Blanche on the 26th. A bivouac during that night on the south side of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur would have turned out more than disastrous for us; it would undoubtedly have cost us our lives! We had better not discuss whether your "Infallible" had sensed the change in the weather.[1] I was annoyed that three weeks later (August 14th–17th) we had to carry out this magnificent expedition with so cumbrous a *Herr*. We succeeded nevertheless, because we were lucky with the weather and had an excellent man (C. Ollier) as porter. How gloriously this memorable Mont Blanc traverse was carried out you may gather from the fact that it lasted from 4 a.m. on August 14th to 8.50 p.m. on August 17th—a full 88 hours! The unflagging energy of Dr. P. Güssfeldt, now dead, was the remarkable thing on that tour. His other capacities were mediocre, I might almost say weak.

After this digression I had better bring this to an end. There is nothing I should like better than to have the pleasure and the honour of welcoming my honoured companion of the 'nineties once more in our beloved mountains, and to shake his honest hand.

In faithful friendship, I respectfully sign myself

Your old "Infallible,"

CHR. KLUCKER.

Fex, Upper Engadine, October 22nd 1925.

HONOURED *BERGFREUND* CAPT. FARRAR,—

I should have wished to thank you earlier for your friendly lines of September 21st, and for your generous gift of puttees, which reached here four days later

[1] "In regard to this I was always fortunate—clearly governed by a lucky star" (Klucker to Farrar, May 4th 1926).

in excellent condition. As however I was intending to send you my private *Führerbuch*, and this had been going the round of three or four friends in Lower Switzerland since the middle of September, I decided to await its return. To-day I am fortunately able to carry out my intention, and my little book travels now contentedly across the Channel to my honoured *Bergfreund*, to whom I am closely bound by pleasant mountain memories.

Thank you from my whole heart for your kind letter and for the beautiful puttees. These will bind still closer our mountain friendship.

I am very glad that you have again successfully climbed and traversed the rugged Grépon, and I congratulate you heartily. In any case the Grépon is still not everybody's peak, for it demands hard work from each individual. Besides, this airy granite Aiguille is one of the finest of climbs.

After your departure from the Bregaglia we had capricious weather, and now and then snow fell in the upper regions. Owing to unfavourable weather I had to sacrifice several fine climbs—Ago di Sciora twice, traverse of Badile (west and east ridge), Cima del Largo twice; and an ascent of Monte Disgrazia went overboard with others. The month of September was a raw, frosty fellow with snowfall and temperature of 6 to 8.5° minus. Now that there is no more climbing, we are sweltering under cloudless skies and warm sunshine—annoying!

As I mentioned above, I am sending you my little book, with the request that you enter in it our experiences of last July. I set great value on the fact that you are once more appearing in it, and that after an interval of 31 or 32 years. Pages 222 and 223 are reserved for you—dear old *Bergfreund*. Unfortunately

not every exploit of your Infallible is recorded; much more than one-third is missing, and there is nothing at all before 1887. I rarely took my book with me, and didn't care for sending it away. I am enclosing with the book a few photos of the old bald-head, which you can keep as a small remembrance.

I am in very good personal health. The crossing from the 72nd to the 73rd year of life, which was completed on September 28th, was a sad and discouraging one for me, as my niece—the only relation left to me, who has suffered from a serious nervous disease since 1912—had a sharp relapse which gives me heavy anxiety. I have no fears for my own brief future, but for that of this unfortunate soul, who should be a support for me in my old days instead of my having to look after her, which I can ill afford to do. Well, come what may! I hope my peace of mind and my humour remain loyal to me, that I may the easier navigate the rocks of fate.

So I'll end my rather lengthy communication with the most earnest wish, that once again in our mountains I may press the hand of my old *Bergfreund* Captain Farrar.

With every respect and honour,

Your old

CHR. KLUCKER.

P.S.—When coming from the Albigna in September, I stopped a short time in Casaccia and took the opportunity of greeting the Gianotti family at the Hotel Stampa. They all commissioned me to send you best wishes and greetings—especially from the charming Miss Olga! All hope to see you again in the summer of 1926—including your Infallible.

Fex, Upper Engadine, October 30th 1925.

HONOURED *BERGFREUND* CAPTAIN FARRAR,—

My *Führerbuch* has found its way back from the great world-city in unexpectedly quick time, and reached the quiet Fextal in very good condition. Many thanks for your entry, and for your kind words, which alas! I hardly deserve to this extent. Well, I'm extremely pleased that the name which sounds so well in Alpine circles appears once more in my little book. I share your hope that our powers may remain unimpaired for the year 1926 also. I need not assure you that it is my earnest wish to be allowed once more to accompany my dear old *Bergfreund.*

With regard to my so-called Memoirs I must tell you that I can't possibly undertake the bit which is still lacking before the 8th or 10th of November. For the last fortnight I have been busy getting ready the necessary fuel for stove and kitchen—work which I must always do myself, as wages here are so dear; and further such work is very wholesome for me, for it strengthens me both physically and morally!

In any case I will let you know as soon as my writing is finished in the main, and at once get you into touch with Dr. Janggen. We shall then see whether what I have put on paper can be published, and whether an English translation is advisable! I am much afraid that the flattering title "Infallible" may have to be struck out for myself. The main thing for your old admirer in the Fextal, to bring his writing to completion, is rest and peace, and no sick people in his hermitage.

So much for to-day. I live in hope of a good *Wiedersehen* in our beloved mountains.

In loyal affection, Your old

CHR. KLUCKER.

Fex-Engadine, June 9th 1928.

TO MY DEAR *BERGFREUND* CAPTAIN FARRAR,—

Owing to my absence in consequence of my niece's illness (the only relation whom I have left), to-day is my first chance of acknowledging your kind and full letter of May 25th, also the receipt of 5 francs, forwarded to me through the postal officials in Berne on the 4th inst. There was no occasion for this reimbursement of postage expenses, for I have long been in your debt, not only from the material, but especially from the moral point of view.

Before dealing with what you write, I must tell you that I have had a very bad winter. From January into March I suffered inexpressibly from rheumatism of the joints. A particularly painful "Tschias,"[1] which suddenly attacked me in the beginning of January, gave me extraordinary trouble right up to the second half of March, and the consequences have not yet entirely vanished. The doctors and others recommended a cure in Baden with warm baths—and a lightening of my thin purse by five or six hundred francs! Simultaneously with my Tschias, my niece who was keeping house for me had a bad relapse of her unfortunate nervous trouble, and went to hospital in Chur in early January. All these bothers meant heavy expense for me and unbearable anxiety, and the result will be—a lean summer! If this is the sunny evening of life, may it be of short duration!

After this rather gloomy prelude, now for our Brenva climb of July 26th 1893. It was with a pang of the heart that I went through your lines and questions about this—looked over my rather thin notes on that glorious tour—and thought to myself: "Van-

[1] Rheumatism of the hip-joint.

ished those good times with good beloved men!" [1]

At the present moment I am in very low spirits, and the probability that I shall have to shut up my peaceful, beloved home weighs heavily on my heart and spirit.

There were to be many plans for next summer. At the end of June I was to accompany my friend Rütter in the Bregaglia, but I am intending to refuse this. It is possible that I may conduct a training course of the Uto Section in the upper Rhaetian Alps from the 15th to the 22nd of July. I am not yet sure whether I can accompany the Olten Section in the Bregaglia Alps from the 18th to the 19th of August; and it is also doubtful whether I can accompany friends who have engaged me for Cima del Largo and Ago di Sciora! These are all matters which give me much thought and anxiety.

If Heaven leaves me good health, I am determined to finish my writing (the so-called Memoirs) next autumn and winter! I still hope for a happy, healthy *Wiedersehen* with my dear old *Bergfreund* Farrar. So I will end, with loyal affection

Your grateful
CHR. KLUCKER.

Fex, Upper Engadine, August 24th 1928.

TO MY DEAR, NOBLE *BERGFREUND* CAPT. FARRAR,—

It is high time, if I am not to fall into disgrace, that I gave you some sign of life.

During the time from the 14th to the 21st of July, which I spent in the Medelser Hut with 21 people from Zürich, I looked vainly down towards the valley, to see if I couldn't catch sight of my old *Bergfreund* with his Peter Almer coming up to the hut. The

[1] Here follow the details given on p. 255.

managers of the course had taken steps that you should be worthily entertained. At the close of the course on Saturday evening I had alas! to give up the hope of seeing you again; your card from Andermatt, which I found on my return here, explained the matter.

And now for your letter of June 20th, which is a matter not merely of importance but of honour to myself. When I took from it a cheque for £10, my astonishment was great, and I very nearly wrote to you that I was most ready under such easy conditions to go on writing information and notes, for such "a scrap of paper" (as you call it in your letter) is not in itself to be despised, if one has done nothing to deserve it. But your letter contains the words "Don't write too much about it," so I said nothing and gave no receipt to your noble and generous gift. I expected no reward from my old *Bergfreund*, whom I have to thank for so much, for the short notes which I sent you in the beginning of June. For your kindness to the wretched old boy from Fex I want to give you my heartiest thanks. I am only sorry that I cannot repay you in some way.

I was in Zürich from the middle of June to the 5th of July, and took the opportunity of consulting a specialist, my friend Dr. Wolfer. He merely advised me not to give up climbing altogether, as weakened joints need exercise to get strong. Despite this, I thought it more sensible to refuse certain engagements, primarily that with my dear friend Rütter of Wädenswil from June 25th to July 5th in the Bregaglia; also the conduct of the Club Week of the Berne Section in the more compact Bernina group; the guiding of the Olten Section Club tours in the Bregaglia peaks, as well as an engagement with the Solo-

thurn members of the Club, Mollet and Nussbaum, for a fortnight in the Bregaglia district. It was undoubtedly wiser for me to take things rather easily.

You see, my dear, noble friend, that this nasty "Tschias" has rather spoilt my summer. During the training course in the Medels district I found that I could perfectly well keep in step with the young people, and could lead the six groups without trouble on the ascents of Piz Medel, Valdrane, Gaglianera and Piz Senteri. It gave me a swelled head to realize this, and consequently I undertook to accompany two young friends from Chur and a third from Zürich among the granite peaks of the Bregaglia. At the end of July we went to the Forno Hut, and climbed from there:

1. Cima del Largo, and Piz Bacone by the fine north arête.
2. Monte Rosso and Colle Vazzeda, to get directions.
3. On August 1st, traverse of Cima Vazzeda to Cima di Rosso.
4. Traverse of the Casnile to the Albigna Hut.
5. Attempt on the Gallo (the headless) in doubtful weather.
6. Finally, we climbed the beautiful rock needle Ago di Sciora.

I found all these climbs easier than did my companions. On last Monday (the 20th) I traversed Piz Tremoggia with two acquaintances from Zürich. Ascent in 8 hours by the south-west ridge, not easy. Since then I have been busy getting firewood ready.

And now, my dear Mr. Farrar, before I end, one more point. Last June Col. E. L. Strutt, your successor as Editor, was kind enough to send me No. 236 of the *Alpine Journal*, and I found there an article on the Southern Aiguille d'Arves. This recalled

vividly our ascent of July 13th 1893, when we went up from the Col Lombard to the Brèche supérieure, and through a misreading of Coolidge's Guide passed the Mauvais Pas without noticing it, and traversed northwards to the middle of the east face, then climbing up by pretty difficult rocks direct to the summit. If I am not mistaken, this route of ours to the summit (turning the Mauvais Pas) was new, or at least a new variation! Dr. Claude Wilson however doesn't mention this route in his article. For the descent we used the Mauvais Pas, finding that its difficulty had been exaggerated. As far as I can remember, we didn't use the rope-ring available there at all.

So I will end, hoping once more in my life to press the hand of my old honourable *Bergfreund* Capt. Farrar.

With every respect and affection,

I remain in gratitude,

Your old

CHR. KLUCKER.

Klucker's hope was not to be realized. The two could have wished for no more fitting end to their friendship than that their Obituary Notices should stand side by side in the *Alpine Journal.*

CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTIAN KLUCKER

1853–1928

(By Dr. ERNST JENNY, *Editor of "Die Alpen"*)

IF you come to Sils Maria in the Engadine, go to the cemetery of Fex. You will find there a beautiful granite stone with the inscription in Romansch:

IN MEMORIA
DA NOS
CHRISTIAN KLUCKER
GUIDA
1853–1928
DA SECZIUN BERNINA
DAL C.A.S. ED AMIHS
DAL A.C.D'INGHILTERRA

That will tell you, however slight your knowledge of Alpine history, that there lies here one of the foremost guides of all time. Stroll through the Fextal and drink freely of its peculiar, quiet beauty, from green meadows and the harmony of flowers to the snowy heights of Chapütschin, Tremoggia and Fora, Behind, at your feet are the shimmering lakes of Sils and Silvaplana, and beyond them tower the rocky citadels of Lagrev and Polaschin. The Fexbach babbles hard by; and below, the Inn thunders past the slender church-spire of Sils Baselgia. This is the home of Christian Klucker; here he spent his

boyhood days. No cramping view nor drab horizon; rather, there is something calm and exalted here. You come to love it, and then you understand how the man who has once taken root in this valley cannot tear himself away again, however much life may afflict him.

Klucker's youth does not tell us much; it was that of a peasant boy of the mountains. But although the youngest of the family, he was physically and spiritually the most gifted. This was his fate, his destiny. His father perceived the danger which the future might hold for the less gifted brothers and sisters, and in his anxiety acted harshly. He called Christian home prematurely—a boy under age, who had just completed his apprenticeship as wheelwright down in Samaden—and transferred to him his house and farmland. Perhaps he anticipated an early death and provided accordingly. Thus the inexperienced son bore the burden for the entire family. It was too heavy, and weighed him down. He had wanted to become something else, something greater, anything but a small farmer and wheelwright laden with debts. His love of nature was profound. Study and experience in the realm of nature was what his spirit yearned for. But this path was now blocked. What should he do? He earned too little, and became—a guide. This brought in a certain amount of money, and was a substitute for the ideal beyond his reach. Perhaps he believed in his heart that he might yet attain to it by a long and arduous by-way. Perhaps; one cannot know, but may guess that there was something of this in the troubles of his old age.

He knew more than his schoolfellows, liked going about alone, climbed high mountains at an early age, and sharpened his senses. Medium-sized and robust, he had a fine, intelligent head with bright, clever eyes.

He was attractive, and probably knew it, but he was not conceited. His testimonials before 1887, of which a few still exist, praise his agreeable refinement, his discretion, his willingness. English tourists called him a "pleasant companion" and "good guide." He was modest, although already distinguished by his "massima prudenza e conoscenza di tutte le punte e montagne adiacenti." "Er ist heiter und höflich und hat sehr viel gelesen," which made him a "sehr interessanten Gefährten"; and his fees were cited as moderate compared with those prevailing at Pontresina. Such is the tenor of the earlier eulogies from *Herren* and *Damen*.

But the tourists whom he conducted then did not aim at any big or serious objectives. Klucker's ambition and his determination to count for something, at least as a guide, if it were not possible otherwise, found too little to thrive upon. His eyes turned towards Pontresina, where a certain Hans Grass (1828–1902) was then in his prime. Surely, he too had had modest beginnings, had been pushed aside by older guides, and had yet made his way to fame and honour. With Dr. Paul Güssfeldt of Berlin, he had achieved the first ascent of Monte di Scerscen, and of the Bernina by the Bianco ridge. A different sort of goal, if you will, from the mountains of Sils! Hans Grass merely smiled at the Fex peaks. This mortified the enterprising Klucker, who knew that his native Tremoggia was no bagatelle, though not so lofty and spectacular as a Palü. Klucker longed for adventurous mountaineers who might perhaps take him with them to foreign mountain regions, as Englishmen often did. His wish was destined to be fulfilled, but the fulfilment brought disappointment and pain as well as joy and pride.

The part played by the guide in the history of Alpine exploration is undoubtedly much greater than is generally believed. In Alpine literature the guide is not infrequently given a secondary place, occasionally none at all, while the *Herr*, his companion, is regarded as the man who deserves the victor's laurels. Yet there are cases where it would be easy to prove who did in actual fact know the untrodden passes, ridges and peaks the better, who conceived the first attack, and who carried it through; and that this was the guide and not the *Herr*. Many a guide was never given his master's writings to read, and therefore knew nothing of what stood written of his share in a successful expedition, nor was he in a position to correct inaccuracies or errors. This applies to the description of the route, as well as to the individual conduct of the participants during the conquest of the mountain.

The relationship between *Herr* and guide is not simply that between employer and employed. As soon as the rope is put on, they are joined for life or death. And if it then happens—as it does fairly often—that the *Herr* overcomes a difficult passage only with the help of the guide preceding him, or that snowstorm, mist, avalanche or falling stones menace *Herr* and guide, and the latter is the one who keeps a level head, then the moment has come for an honest patron of fine feeling to renounce patronage and to acknowledge his guide as a man and a friend, yes, even as his superior.

As a guide, Christian Klucker experienced every sort of treatment. From some quarters condescension, suppression of fact or misrepresentation of his conduct in a serious situation; being rated as a well-paid hireling; exploitation of his expert knowledge and his good-natured counsel. From others,

praise of his character, his love of nature, his knowledge and ability, his unfailing sureness, his exemplary behaviour. Fortunately the praise exceeds the blame an hundredfold. Klucker had a frank, manly bearing that quickly won the hearts of others. On occasions he was angular and very outspoken, even obstinate, and as years increased touchy at times, but also easy of reconciliation. There has perhaps never been a guide who could count so many friends amongst his *Herren* as Christian Klucker. He knew that well, and it did him good and went far to soften the hard lot of his later years at home. A perusal of the letters he left behind shows clearly that the affection of his friends was not something that sprang from emotional impulse and gradually wore off again. The Englishman Farrar maintained an unbroken friendship for him from 1893 onward, although after 1894 he did not climb with him again until 1925. And whenever Farrar, who had at his command an unusual historical knowledge of Alpine matters, wanted reliable data about mountains like Meije, Mont Blanc, Grépon, Badile, Fünffingerspitze, etc., he turned to Klucker.

At first, like every guide in the making, Klucker was glad of any opportunity to conduct tourists. The quality of the patron played no part as yet. Here lay a danger for him, as for any guide of that time or of the present day. Let a young guide have the luck to fall in with a *Herr* of uncommon ability and enterprise, and thus achieve notable successes; let this *Herr* mention the name of his guide in print and thus the guide becomes known. In Klucker's case, this *Herr* was Dr. Theodor Curtius, Professor of Chemistry in the University of Munich and later of Heidelberg. He was soon aware of it. As the two understood each other very quickly both as mountaineers and as men,

there sprang up between *Herr* and guide one of the most delightful of Alpine friendships, a friendship which lasted from 1883 until death. Dozens of letters bear witness to it. What a deep impression Klucker made upon Curtius, may be gathered from his entry in Klucker's *Führerbuch* for their campaign in the summer of 1887:

"The way in which he negotiated the ascent of the peaks of Cima del Largo was as much a masterpiece of rock-climbing technique, as the cutting down through the extraordinarily broken Bondasca Glacier, without the support of a second guide, was a noteworthy achievement in ice technique. Although Klucker knew the east wall of Monte Rosa as little as I, he arrived after very brief consideration at the diagnosis—contrary, be it noted, to the views of local guides—that an ascent of the Jägerhorn by the rock wall, some 6,000 feet high, was possible without difficulty or danger. In fact, when we carried out this wonderful ascent on the following day, we did not encounter a single really difficult passage. The energy and resourcefulness with which he accomplished the descent, through fresh snow three feet deep, from the Jägerhorn over the Gorner Glacier to the Riffelhaus, was an admirable counterpart to the scaling of the rock wall. After such performances it goes without saying that Klucker was absolutely at home from the outset on the Matterhorn and Zinal Rothorn, although he had never seen these regions before.

"Untiring, always finding his way, keen and fearless on the heights, sociable in hut and camp, an eminent climber, a man of sound knowledge, as skilful with the ice-axe as with the pen; an agreeable, ever-welcome travelling companion, as useful in the town as in hut or bivouac; patient, cheerful, loyal, self-sacrificing in his devotion; and—best of all—a man whose love for his native mountains transcends everything else: I regard Christian Klucker as the model of a first-class guide."

There is hardly a doubt that it was his affection for Klucker that induced Curtius to buy and enlarge the chalet "Mulin vegl" in Sils Maria, and it is just as probable that it was through Klucker's influence that



AT THE NEW FORNO HUT, SEPTEMBER, 1924

Professor Curtius and Klucker in the centre

From a photograph kindly lent by HERR A. RIEDERER, *Rorschach*

Curtius built the first hut in the Bregaglia Alps—the Forno Hut—and entrusted it to his care. With Klucker as intermediary, Curtius gave his hut in 1920 to the S.A.C., and it was handed over to the Rorschach section. When on September 6th 1924, the inauguration of the rebuilt hut took place, *Herr* and *Führer* were seen together for the last time; in truth, one could not tell which was the *Herr* and which the guide.[1]

Klucker's education impressed his patrons at once. Ludwig Norman-Neruda, the excellent English mountaineer, of Swedish extraction, expresses this in 1889: "All I can say is that I envy him his knowledge of Alpine flora, and that I have never met a guide whose level of education was as high as Christian Klucker's." This *Herr*, too, placed the greatest confidence in his guide from their first acquaintance. Before long he referred to him in public as "my friend." These two undertook only difficult mountains together and generally by new routes.[2] When Norman-Neruda published his new climbs in the *Mitteilungen des deutschen und Österreichischen Alpenvereins* (1890, pp. 260, 261), he wrote at the end:

"On all tours, except those in the Dolomites, Christian Klucker was my guide, and it was only for the ascent of the Lyskamm that I had a second, Joseph Reinstadler. For my

[1] In *Alpina*, 1924, Dr. Jenny describes the welcome given to "the two splendid old mountain bears" as they came up the path; Curtius looking contentedly through his scholar's spectacles at the re-born hut, and Klucker with a roguish smile on his incomparably weather-beaten face, receiving a bouquet from fair hands—Andreas Fischer's unwritten chapter "Herr und Führer" in living form.

[2] They have on record a total of seventeen new routes on fifteen different mountains.

part, I know of no guide, be it in Austria, Switzerland or Italy, who can compare with Klucker.[1] His knowledge of snow conditions is as great as his rock-climbing is wonderful."

On three occasions Klucker accompanied the Englishman John Percy Farrar, who was a leading spirit of the Alpine Club both as a man and a mountaineer, and whose knowledge of Alpine history was surpassed only by that of his compatriot, W. A. B. Coolidge. The extracts from Klucker's *Führerbuch* give details of their climbs together, and show the warmth of their friendship. Farrar writes of Klucker:

"To my mind he is as good as ever—a great master. There has been no better mountaineer. He will go down in Alpine history as practically without a rival for supreme knowledge of a mountain, never-failing care, executive ability and a sterling character that makes him a charming companion."[2]

When Klucker told his English friend about his memoirs, Farrar discussed the possibility of an English edition. This also did not materialize, for Klucker died in December 1928 before he had quite completed his memoirs, and Farrar in February 1929, before he could publish a memorial to Klucker in the *Alpine Journal*.

In August 1893 Christian Klucker became acquainted with the German mountaineer Dr. Paul Güssfeldt of Berlin. The latter had, with Hans Grass of Pontresina as his guide, made some notable new climbs in the Bernina district. Now Güssfeldt turned his eager attention to Mont Blanc. At that time no one had yet traversed the Péteret ridge, but it was known that it must be at once the most superb route and the most considerable undertaking in the Alps.

[1] Similar praise is to be found in the book, *The Climbs of Norman-Neruda*, published by his wife, p. 25.

[2] English text in Klucker's *Führerbuch*, p. 222.

For this reason Güssfeldt sought out two guides who might win him this great victory: Emile Rey from Courmayeur and Christian Klucker from Sils in the Fextal. They did win the day for him, and the brave porter César Ollier contributed his share. In the previous June, Rey and Klucker had become acquainted through the first ascent of the Ago di Sciora, when they guided the Russian Rydzewski up that peak. These two eminent guides were quite unlike in character: Rey, a daring, resolute fellow, now vehement and sharp-toned, now amiable and gentle —a French Piedmontese; Klucker, a deliberator and a keen observer, determined and tenacious; on the mountain-side, calm, cheerful, and self-controlled; seldom rude, ever helpful—a Rhaeto-Roman with an Alemannic strain. Both guides had ambition and a keenness for the great achievement.

Klucker intended to include in his memoirs a detailed description of the Péteret climb on Mont Blanc, for he was not altogether satisfied with Güssfeldt's version.[1] By way of training, they ascended the Aiguille Noire de Péteret on August 11th, and of this Güssfeldt writes:

"Nevertheless I set out the day after my arrival (in Courmayeur), bivouacked on the rocks of the Fauteuil des Allemands, climbed the Aiguille Noire, the rocks being absolutely bare of snow, and returned in the evening, tired but—as the later success revealed—fully trained."

However, Klucker knew better. From a letter of Klucker's[2] to Farrar, one may draw the conclusion that Güssfeldt's was probably not the directing brain on the Péteret ridge, since he had evidently a good

[1] Published first in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 1893, then in the book *Der Montblanc, Studien im Hochgebirge*, Berlin, 1894.

[2] See the Letter to Captain Farrar, February 18th 1920, p. 264.

deal to do to look after himself. He acknowledged the performance of his guides, who from August 14th to 17th 1893, did their best for eighty-eight hours, and covered themselves with glory. He wrote in Klucker's *Führerbuch*:

"Since the expedition made extraordinary demands upon the strength, endurance and courage of the guides, it should here be stated, to the honour of Klucker especially, that he not only fulfilled all expectations, but surpassed them. It was a great pleasure for me to make the acquaintance of a man like Klucker; for he combines the qualities of a guide of the first rank with those of a good, enterprising man.

"PAUL GÜSSFELDT.

"COURMAYEUR, *August 21st* 1893."

Klucker had hardly had an adequate rest before he entered the service of the Englishman Edward Davidson, who was accompanied by M. Holzmann and Gerald FitzGerald. Klucker wanted to write a chapter on this also, but never got beyond a few sketchy fragments. They must have been good climbers.

The list of the many mountain tours accomplished by Klucker and Davidson is almost unique.[1] Only occasionally did they take a local guide or porter with them, because Klucker did not like to be "guided": it deprived him of the joy of finding the way for himself.

It would be natural to assume that when *Herr* and guide wander over the mountains together every summer and autumn year after year, they would grow in intimacy. All the more so if the guide's education and character are such as to invite it, and if moreover his Alpine experience and Alpine knowledge bring to the *Herr* successes beyond all expectation. This was not the case, however, with Klucker and Anton v.

[1] Details are given in the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 35, pp. 263–4.

Rydzewski, although between 1891 and 1900 they went to the Bregaglia Alps together again and again, and won the most brilliant victories. This Russian baron, who lived in Dresden, had taken up mountaineering late in life, too late perhaps for difficult undertakings. He lacked the necessary technique on rock and ice and never acquired it properly, since his physical powers were hardly adequate. It is not an unusual occurrence that a man craves to be the very thing which by nature he is not, and cannot well become. If there be present in addition the inculcated belief that one is the master by virtue of birth and has a right to give orders to his servant, then of course every bridge that may lead to an understanding with the other is destroyed. This "other" was Klucker. He expresses himself plainly enough about it in his memoirs. One sees how much he suffered in this often well-nigh intolerable relationship between *Herr* and guide. He was accustomed to be met in a cordial spirit, as the trusty comrade and friend, and not as the paid conductor. At first it seemed to be different, when in Promontogno Rydzewski wrote in his *Führerbuch*: "He is every inch a man, and a guide of the very first order." This was probably written in imitation of a Curtius and a Norman-Neruda, who as mountaineers and men were far superior to him, but with whom he wished to appear on an equal footing. The Russian would have been delighted if some unknown Bregaglia peak had actually been named "Pizzo Rydzewski." In Klucker's *Führerbuch* he doubly underlined these two words and adorned them with exclamation marks.

Klucker has been justly asked: "Why do you keep on taking such a man on such mountains?" His answer was: "I have often asked myself the same

question. In ten years of association with him I have three times refused an engagement. I also gave him notice in the Albigna on July 3rd 1892, and in Franzaina on June 28th 1893, but each time he brought me round with smooth words and promises. And why did I allow myself to be persuaded to go with him again? The underlying motives were the following:

"1. Already in the 'eighties, when I carried out tours in the Bregaglia with my dear friend Professor Dr. Curtius, I said to myself, seeing the large number of unclimbed peaks in that region: *You must make it your task to open up that group!*

"2. I tried in vain to direct the attention of *Herren* like Norman-Neruda, J. P. Farrar and others to this district. I went with the Russian, so as not to let others snap up the opportunities.

"3. I knew, too, that our neighbours of the Italian Alpine Club had begun to take notice of the Bregaglia region, all the more so because of Rydzewski's publications in the Rivista Mensile of the C.A.I."

It pained Klucker greatly that Rydzewski wanted to be immortalized in Alpine literature as the pioneer of the Bregaglia Alps, although he knew perfectly well to whom he was primarily indebted for his local information and for the propounding and solving of the mountain problems there. Therefore Klucker wrote the Rydzewski parts of his memoirs more fully than the other chapters, not indeed for the love of it —too many letters testify to that—but filled with inner resentment, and at the same time with a sense of anxiety lest he deviate in certain places from the path of strict accuracy.

It would go far beyond the scope of this sketch to enumerate all the tourists, men and women, whom

Klucker has guided through the high Alps, and to name all the peaks and passes he has set foot upon. After his return from the Canadian Rocky Mountains, whither he accompanied Edward Whymper with three other guides in 1901, without great success, he remarked amongst friends that he had probably ascended something like 2,000 peaks. And if one adds those climbed between 1902 and 1928, the total would be well over 3,000, remembering that he was still climbing at the age of 73 and 74—summer and autumn—some 35 peaks. According to his own notes,[1] he carried out 34 first ascents, 28 first traverses with new ascents or descents, 11 new and difficult passes and 65 new routes and variations. Of the first ascents, 21 were in the southern Bregaglia Alps.

Amongst Swiss mountaineers, two might be mentioned as having often climbed with Klucker, and as having developed a close friendship with him, though they were much younger than he: Rudolf Staub of Zürich and Hans Rütter of Wädenswil. The former, who as geologist spent much time in the Rhaetian Alps, had in Klucker a man who knew every inch of the ground, and was a good listener and observer. The latter, author and editor for the S.A.C. of their Climbers' Guide, *Die südlichen Bergellerberge und Monte Disgrazia*, could certainly have found no more reliable adviser and expert on this area than Christian Klucker. There was also their common interest in the Albigna and Sciora Huts. Klucker was particularly glad to undertake any kind of work which promoted the welfare of the S.A.C.

As one may readily believe, it was not only his love

[1] See *Alpina*, 1924, pp. 288–9, record supplied by Klucker to Dr. Jenny.

for and familiarity with the mountains that induced Klucker to join the S.A.C., but just as surely the impulse toward knowledge and education. The S.A.C. had from the outset regarded the opening-up of the Alps not as a mere conquest of virgin peaks and passes by sportsmen and tourists, but also as a serious exploration of the land and its life, as a bodily and spiritual "immersion," such as Conrad Gesner had already desired in the sixteenth century. This conception was reflected in the Year Book. Klucker with his thirst for knowledge soon realized how important a source this was for him, and that it also opened up further sources. Thus he came to know Gottlieb Studer's *Über Eis und Schnee*, a work which every serious mountaineer and guide of that time must read if he wanted to know something of topography and mountaineering feats and to propound new problems for himself. The Year Book's popular-scientific treatises nurtured likewise his enjoyment of the world of plants and stones, so that later he bought the works of experts like Bernhard Studer, Albert Heim, and Carl Schröter, and acquired an excellent Alpine library. The study of this literature, as well as his association with tourists who were familiar with the natural sciences, decidedly enhanced Klucker's inborn gift for the observation of nature.

His was not only a talent for learning, but also for teaching. This was evident in his later work in guides' and training courses. It may be that in Klucker the world lost a teacher and scientist of the first order.

One noticed his aptitude for teaching on so-called club tours. It was more than merely a demonstration of perfect technique: "from Klucker there streamed a power, energy and confidence all his own," which

were communicated to his pupils. Therein lies indeed the secret of every successful teacher and of all the sympathy which unites master and apprentice. After 1895, when guideless mountaineering in the high Alps began to increase and with it the number of Alpine accidents, the idea gradually ripened within the S.A.C. of instituting practice courses for their younger members. Experienced guides were given first consideration as instructors, and among them no one took precedence of Father Klucker. Since he had taken up ski-ing as early as 1900 we meet him in 1904 as an instructor in a ski course which the Rhaetia Section of the S.A.C. conducted on the Lenzerheide in January of that year, the principal teachers being the famous Norwegian runners, T. Heyerdahl and T. Smith, and the Swiss Victor de Beauclair. Presently Klucker enticed the three into the Upper Engadine, where they were enthusiastically received by the native youth, and took them up Piz Fora on January 28th. In 1907 he directed a ski course for the Basle Section on Mont Soleil in the Bernese Jura, and in the Bernoullianum in Basle delivered his first public lecture, on "The Canadian Journey with Whymper."

From 1918, his teaching activities became much more extensive, partly from external causes. During the World War, the mountain climbing of the young Swiss had been checked, although as soldiers during the long occupation of the frontiers many had found opportunities for ski-ing and for limited Alpine activities. When the war came to an end, thousands of men crowded into the S.A.C. within a very few years, thus stimulating the demand for training courses. The large Uto Section in Zürich eagerly chose Klucker as teacher and director of exercises. Between 1918 and 1928 he taught no less than eight

times in the regions of the Medelser Hut, the Albert Heim Hut and the Silvretta and Forno Huts. Other S.A.C. Sections, which sought to engage the splendid teacher, were Basle, Winterthur, St. Gallen and Rhaetia. Here is a testimonial:

"During the exercises, on the tours, in the hut after the day's work, everywhere, Klucker demonstrated his special aptitude as director of such courses. His teaching was based upon years of experience and was eagerly followed by grateful students. . . . His example has rendered extraordinary service to the Alpine cause." [1]

One can easily understand that Klucker was also called upon by the Central Committee of the S.A.C. to act as instructor for their guide courses. He himself comments several times in his memoirs upon the guide organization, especially in Graubünden. He emphasizes clearly there, as in his letters, that it would be highly advantageous if the S.A.C. were to take under its charge the whole body of guides in the Swiss Alps, since this would be the best means of combating dilettantism among the guides as well as extravagant charges.

Klucker's transfer from the Rhaetia Section to the Bernina Section, when the latter was founded in 1891, was followed shortly by his being entrusted with the supervision of the huts. For in this department he had had experience too. Theodor Curtius, founder of the Forno Hut (1889), had placed its building and supervision in his hands. Conscientiously he made his annual reports, until Curtius gave the hut to the S.A.C. in 1920. No less than five huts—Rascher, Jürg Jenatsch, Boval, Tschierva and Mortèl—were at one time under his care. In his letters, he complains sometimes about the numerous errands and the large

[1] *Führerbuch*, p. 241.

correspondence which this office laid upon him. When Dr. Marco de Marchi of Milan was planning the erection of a hut on the Crast' Agüzza Saddle, he entrusted Klucker with the building preparations and with the transport of the building material. In 1919 it was proposed to build a hut on the Sella Pass close to the Italian Frontier in honour of the first conqueror of the Bernina, Johann Coaz. Klucker was against this, and advocated instead the building of a hut on the Gemsfreiheit, at the foot of the Bernina. Eventually, the old Mortèl Hut was pulled down, the Coaz Hut erected in its place (in 1925) and transferred to the Rhaetia Section in Chur. This satisfied Klucker, for the circle of the Upper Engadine huts was now happily closed.

Klucker rendered other valuable services to the S.A.C., especially in helping to publish the *Bregaglia Climbers' Guide*, and as adviser in the revision of the topographical atlas of his home district, where no one knew the topography better than he.

Scarce any Swiss guide has served the Swiss Alpine Club as zealously as did Christian Klucker.

Being continually in demand as guide, Klucker was often away from home. Hence he was not the most suitable person for a public office which required his presence. Still, his Sils was not a large community with pressing daily business. It led a contemplative life at the outlet of the Fextal, not far from the lakes of Sils and Silvaplana, apparently content that Segantini should have found the scenery picturesque, and that summer guests gradually appeared when St. Moritz became either too noisy or too expensive for them. Klucker's intelligence and energy were not hid from his fellow townsmen, and his renown as a guide,

which culminated in 1901, was likewise a benefit to the community. He had seen much and observed much, had been in many parts of the world, was sociable, helpful, wrote a better hand than many a schoolmaster, was no novice at arithmetic and could speak without fear. Certainly such a man should be on the local Board.

It is by no means so simple a matter to be a Committee or Council member in a small commune. Capital and breadth of vision are generally lacking. People live too close to one another, have too many of the same needs, know each other too well and have too many relatives. Klucker was different in these respects; he was less narrow in outlook, and his judgment was more free. Since he well knew his shortcomings, that is, in respect of a thorough school education, he interested himself particularly in school matters. As a keen member of the School Welfare organization he was active for something like twenty years; and he never departed from his point of view that only the best teacher is good enough for the children, and that it is the duty of commune and state to remunerate him adequately. Beating pupils or rebuking them harshly were methods deeply repellent to him. Since Providence had not granted him a family, he found a sort of substitute in the school. He was the friend and adviser of the boys and girls of Sils, just as he was of the young climbers in the mountains. They knew it and loved him. The school authorities in Switzerland do not often visit the classrooms. But Klucker liked to go. "Half a day at the school has a far greater and deeper devotional value for me than going to church."[1]

Just as important was his position on the Communal

[1] Palm-Sunday letter, 1927.

Council which he served as its President in 1907, and again later. He took an interest in everything that concerned his commune and his valley: improvement of bridges and footpaths, weirs, roads, forests, pastures; introduction of electric light, and canalization; the fight against drink and its consequences; reasonable taxation; promotion of tourist traffic, etc. In communal matters he was absolutely no respecter of persons, even when it meant making enemies. He tolerated no favouritism on account of wealth. "We do not seek favour of individuals, and we expect that in communal affairs the personal element will be left out," he wrote in 1907 to a mountain peasant who thought that he could claim a larger share of pasture.

He also opposed the raising of the price of land through the hotel industry, since agriculture and the development of the commune would suffer thereby, the increase in the native population would be jeopardized, and trade and business retarded. "When the tax commissioner is about there is a sudden drop in the price of land; when he stays away prices keep at a high level." [1]

Contrary to the general habit of councillors, he did not cling to office. He resigned. But when a few years later, owing to vicissitudes, the commune fell into serious straits, it trustfully gave him the reins once more. "I pulled the cart out of the mire and then I left again," he remarks dryly on this subject, though it had been no sinecure.

Klucker defended his commune vigorously when he found it menaced from outside. When in 1907 a large Swiss company wanted to use the neighbouring Silsersee for water works and to divert the course of the Fexbach, he opposed this project doggedly on behalf

[1] Letter to the Regierungsrat in Chur, February 1909.

of the local Council. Thus he wrote to *Ständerat* Dr. Calonder[1]: "This much is certain: neither will the townspeople grant a concession, nor will our political commune look on indifferently while our magnificent Alpine lake is converted into a common reservoir. *The beauty of our neighbourhood is not to be bought for money.*" Or in 1908: "*Why should our lakes, the gems of our mountain country, be given over to speculators?* We shall resist the project."

Again and again Christian Klucker held a protecting hand over his home valley. He abhorred the disfiguring of Nature for industrial purposes. Thus from 1919 he opposed for years by word and pen[2] the endeavour to exploit the Silsersee and the Albignabach for electric power. In December 1926 he called upon Federal Councillor Häberlin in Berne on this matter and laid before him all the reasons and arguments against the alleged necessity for such power works. They reassured him; but he soon gathered the impression that the Federal Department for Water Supply was "making eyes" at the concession-hunters. When on September 25th 1927, the Upper Engadine was visited by a frightful storm and the Bregaglia glacier-torrents, Ordlegna and Albigna, washed away bridges, with houses and post-road, and devastated fruitful soil, the advocates of the power works saw fit to blame their opponents in the Engadine for the damage wrought. "The flood in the valley had hardly subsided," writes Klucker to a friend, "when a rapid fire of newspaper articles was opened, all aimed at the Silsersee Power Works for the purpose of making propaganda with the Cantonal Government." The Swiss Heimatschutz

[1] Later Swiss Federal Councillor and then League of Nations Arbitrator in Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland.

[2] See letter to the Editor of *Die Alpen*, p. 314.

also came out in opposition to the power works, and the Bernina Club Section followed suit. It was fortunate that Klucker did not live to see the year 1930, or he would also have had the project of a Piz Bernina Railway to oppose.

Klucker was no adversary of tourist traffic. He knew well enough its advantages for the Alpine population, and he himself had a small share therein. But he hated industry when it encroached upon beautiful scenery and then posed with bland presumption as the benefactor of man. " No one has ever put his money into a power works scheme for the benefit of others." He also regarded it as illogical to exploit the beauties of a mountain valley as advertisement for the tourist trade and presently to destroy a part of it, with the idea of gaining still more money. His outlook for the future was sceptical. " To hear no more of the sound of the magnificent Albigna waterfall, because industry has devoured it? Come, liberator Death! "

Klucker's kinship with nature expressed itself also in his profound love for plants and animals. In his old age he was still adorning his home with flowers, like a devoted housewife, and tending them with his own hand. He likewise looked after the small gardens of his scholar-mountaineer friends, Theodor Curtius of Heidelberg and Rudolf Staub of Zürich, who had summer chalets at Sils. While still a young guide he had received much praise from English and German tourists for his " familiarity with flowers and rocks," for his " Freude an der Natur und Kenntnis der Pflanzen und Mineralien."

When in 1908 an Alpine garden—" Alpinum "—was laid out on the outskirts of Sils and a good supervisor was wanted, the choice fell upon Klucker.

Although he knew how to appreciate the beauty of the mountain winter, and as early as 1900 was making his ski-tracks through the glittering powder-snow, he turned his eyes with much greater eagerness upon the awakening spring. "Every year I am profoundly moved by the floral beauty of the Alps. Never is my Fextal more lovely than when crocus and soldanella sing their resurrection song beside the melting snows." [1] "The lowlander makes a poem of winter in the mountains, because he does not know its full force and duration. How dreary and depressing it is when snowstorms rage over our roofs all day and all night."

Klucker also knew intimately the manner of growth and the habitat of the rarer Alpine plants. Whoever introduced that subject gave him great pleasure, and he was always ready to supply full information. He knew, for instance, that in 1920 *Lychnis alpina* blossomed in the Fextal in only two places. In vain he searched for them again later. When the seventy-year-old man discovered the pretty *Campanula cenisia* during a climb on Piz Materdell, he was enchanted. And he was the only one in the wide environs of the Silsersee who knew where *Campanula thyrsoidea* was to be found. On July 21st 1918, as he stood tired and discontented on the Passo di Sorreda (9,088 ft.) he found to his delight "no less than fifteen species within a limited area. I thought of my dead Alpine garden near Sils Maria, and of the Linnaea at Bourg St. Pierre, and became almost mournful."

Unlike other great guides, such as Hans Grass, Christian Almer, Melchior Anderegg and Alexander Burgener, Klucker was no sportsman.[2] As a boy he

[1] Letter to Dr. Jenny, May 25th 1925.

[2] Rydzewski describes Klucker carrying a kid over a stream, and lamenting the death of a bird on the Forno Glacier; he

accompanied his father when the latter went chamois hunting, but the chase never aroused in him any enthusiasm. He would rather have seen marmot and chamois protected than hunted, and could wax wrathful when Italian poachers from Val Malenco encroached upon Federal preserves. "Colani would have done better to work more and kill less," said Klucker, when I related something about this legendary king of hunters, and he quoted pensively from Schiller's "Alpenjäger" the words of the mountain spirit:

> "Raum für alle hat die Erde—
> Was verfolgst du meine Herde?"

An affectionate relationship existed between the aged Klucker and what was, on quiet days, often the only other occupant of his cottage—his faithful black kitten! He would think of it when absent in town, and his love for it would urge him home, because "it would pine away without me." He positively growled at anyone who was cruel to animals. Brutal drivers he would report for punishment; in a flash of anger he boxed the ears of one offender. He who protects animals is also a friend to man.

Klucker kept up an active correspondence which increased with the years. Eventually it reached such proportions that after 1907 he found it necessary to keep copy-books. They speak to the reader of his extraordinary love of order, and his conscientiousness. In these letters, numbering over 2,500, it is not the guide working out tours with his *Herr* that strikes the leading note; it is rather the ready Alpine adviser who

contrasts Barbaria, stoning a covey of ptarmigan, and rushing in search of the nest when a dipper flew out.

is familiar with every district; the friend who seeks or gives consolation; the champion of a sound idea, of his native home, or of himself when attacked; the householder who looks after his family and his commune. He employed the German, Romansch or Italian language, as required. His letters journeyed to all parts of Switzerland, to Italy, Austria, Germany and England.

Klucker's mother-tongue was Romansch, as it is spoken in the Upper Engadine. His brief training at school precluded a complete mastery of the German written language. Thus one often finds words of Ladinist origin in his German letters and memoirs.

The idea of writing memoirs was probably not conceived by Klucker himself. And yet the thought was not far from him in 1902, when he heard of a publication by Anton v. Rydzewski, whom he had guided for years in the Bregaglia Alps. This must have brought home to Klucker how little the *Herr* understood his guide, but took care rather to place all the pioneer's laurels upon his own head. At that time, however, Klucker was still of an age when one prefers to make rather than to write history.

In conversation Klucker was a lively story-teller, able to combine seriousness with humour and satire, and gifted at the same time with an excellent memory for facts and observations; one might thus have thought it would have come easy to him to express himself in writing. But such was not the case. In November 1919 he was persuaded by friends in Basle to write his memoirs as guide. Their suggestion was partly inspired by the good intention of helping him financially, for since 1912 he had had to provide in increased measure for an invalid brother, a delicate sister and her sickly daughter. As he sat at his writ-

ing desk he probably felt somewhat like Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen. Only he had no loving Elisabeth at his side to encourage him. For years he groans and grumbles in his letters about the torture of having to write memoirs. He did not want to hurry over the preliminaries. A large quantity of material had first to be collected and sifted. Then he wanted to make a rough draft, and finally to write out a fair copy. John Percy Farrar, with whom he had undertaken so many notable and arduous climbs, chaffed him with his "infallibility." Klucker wanted to make sure that no one should be able to reproach him with inaccuracy in his memoirs. Instead of telling his story with a fresh and unburdened spirit, even at the risk of using light and shade poetically, he stuck rigidly to facts. And it was just this that hindered the flow of his pen and gave rise to his fear that he had undertaken too much. "Yes, if it were a question of ascending a Cima del Largo, a Bacone north ridge or an Ago di Sciora, I should be a match for any young literary light." [1]

In the memoirs the chapter on the Bregaglia Alps comes first in scope and importance, since Klucker had done more pioneer work there than elsewhere, and he wished it to be particularly accurate. Then came a thunderbolt. Rydzewski, who as early as 1902 had threatened him with a book on the Bregaglia, had died in the meanwhile. His heirs now tried to publish this book, and Klucker had a look at the text. He found there all kinds of statements about himself which did not agree at all with what had previously been published, and which he could only take as a grave affront. He wished for a court of honour, and the examination

[1] Letter to Professor Dr. Curtius in Heidelberg, December 10th 1923.

of the text by someone familiar with the Bregaglia, such as Hans Rütter of Wädenswil. However, no further steps were taken with the printing, and only a revised portion appeared in the S.A.C. Year Book for 1923. Klucker's irritation on the subject did not benefit the memoirs. He hesitated and postponed for better days, now vexed, now sad, now apathetic, until he appeared to himself "a helpless, inefficient old boy," a "numbskull" and a "cranky old grumbler." And at other times he wavered in his confidence as to the "quality of the production."

The reminiscences of Theodor Curtius and Ludwig Norman-Neruda were to have been followed by rather long chapters: "With John Percy Farrar in the Years 1893 and 1894"; "Mont Blanc by the Péteret Ridge with Güssfeldt in 1893"; "Climbs with W. E. Davidson" and "My Winter Climbs." On January 1st 1925, Klucker wrote to a friend that these had not been drafted as yet, but would be easy to compose. According to his statement, 300 pages were ready in manuscript on May 30th 1926, and the rest would amount to a further 150 pages, a part of which had already been sketched.[1] Unfortunately it is just these valuable chapters that were never written. He meant to report "in more condensed form" on the tours with Farrar and Davidson, and more in detail about Mont Blanc.

The interruption of the memoirs, however, had deeper causes than one may perhaps be led to believe. It was not death, but life that broke them off. This is clearly shown by his letters.

Albeit Christian Klucker had grown up in the moun-

[1] There were left by the deceased only dates and his *Führerbuch* from 1887 to 1928.

tains, he did not appear to have been made for a solitary life. Once, during the winter of 1920–1921, at the age of nearly 70 he was quite alone for a time, and the monotony pressed heavily upon him. The gloomy outlook into the twilight of his life "strangled" his spirit at times. "And yet I should so much like to keep a young heart," he lamented to his friend Fritz Sulzberger.

Let us not picture the ageing Klucker as a calm philosopher in a beautiful solitude. He had not done with life yet. Not even the writing of his memoirs could change that fact. He felt himself inwardly tossed and torn. His care for the welfare of others he regarded sometimes as futile, sometimes as a mere moral duty. Let us not forget that out of consideration for his less successful brothers and sisters this man, once so vigorous and so popular, had never married, although a passionate heart was beating in his breast. Thus in his old age, as the members of his family died one by one, leaving only one invalid, whom it was his duty to care for, he perceived no way of deliverance. In spirit he may have pictured his home with an affectionate wife and flourishing children and grandchildren. But when of a stormy night he would start up from his sleep, he must have felt once more: You are alone, you have been servant and housekeeper for others; the hand of destiny has willed it thus, and has cast you into this solitude.

From a casual survey, Klucker's nature appears full of contradictions. In reality his inner life was woven round that nucleus which is called love and friendship. This is attested by the almost ardent affection of the old man for children, to whom he liked to be "grandfather," by his willingness even to leave the Fextal, if it should get much lonelier there for him; by his belief

in the words of the poet, that man is the grandest idea in God's creation. Of course this belief made him suffer, because it was the belief in himself. And he had expected more of himself and for himself. Both his gifts and his natural urge pointed toward a larger sphere. Yet the liberating power did not come his way. He must often have known and felt that he counted for something in the small commune, in the large valley, in guide circles from Tyrol to the Dauphiné, and amongst the best mountaineers of Europe. But this knowledge and feeling did not touch the deepest in him. It is not, of course, quite certain that he would under different circumstances have achieved something greater and more lasting, but it seems probable. Or is it an error to say that Klucker indeed hoped to find his happiness in his profession as guide, in his association with mountains and men, but thereby missed his main highway in life and had to travel a rugged by-path? We have a wistful indication in his own words: "Since the necessary foundation and preparation were lacking I was prevented from attaining my full development as a man, and had therefore to be content with mediocrity. . . . I have not fulfilled my life work by a long way." [1]

Honour and fame satisfy but the fringe of the human soul; the depth remains untouched, and waits for the nurture of love. His blossoming in companionship was merely a substitute. Not only did he find happiness there but reflected it himself. But this same joyous man could suddenly grow thoughtful and serious. Not from ill humour or nervousness, but from the great longing in the depth of a soul which craved a different sort of happiness. Life withheld it from him, and he withheld it from himself for the sake

[1] Letter to Dr. Jenny, January 10th 1926.

of others. But what one can hide from view in the prime of an active career breaks out in old age like a half-healed wound. Only thus can we understand his frequent touching lamentations over the futility of his life, and his even more pathetic yearning after loving and lovable people. The evidence contained in the letters of the aged Klucker allows of no other interpretation.

There is one further factor which speaks for itself. His modest earnings as guide and as postmaster of Fex left him no margin for his old age, and he was not acquisitive by nature. Small savings melted away, and as he grew older his income decreased. He did in fact earn something by his lectures—he delivered over fifty—and help was at hand in time of need, for which his gratitude was sincere. But deep down in his soul all this gave him pain. Another might have taken comfort in the assurance that such help was no more than a well-earned honorarium. But not so Klucker —he only made believe. True, he avows in a letter written in 1921, that he was fundamentally a happy man, if it came to comparisons, for he was in good health and every day brought him proofs that he was respected and honoured. But this statement is more polite than convincing, and does not change our picture. His readiness to believe that the company of cheerful friends and listeners would be a true fountain of youth for him was a form of self-deception, for only a few days after his return home from Basle, Zürich or St. Gallen, the shadow of depression would descend upon him once more, especially in the winter-time. When the breath of spring was stirring through the Fextal, there awakened in his breast a new hope and joy, bringing welcome visions of the summer when he would be up in the mountains

with his good friends, "the happiest man for miles around." Then his memoirs seemed to him dull or even not worth writing.

The soul of man is not a clear-cut philosophical system, "no cleverly reasoned book," it is nature itself; Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. A multitude of hidden forces moved Klucker's spirit, so that well into old age it could swing through an unusually wide range of emotions. He himself at 70 still believed in his "strong soul," though hardship and misfortune were his constant companions.

The end came suddenly. On December 21st 1928, as he was going down from the Fextal to Sils Maria in Sunday attire to join his beloved school-children at the Christmas tree, death took him kindly by the hand.

Farrar was right:

Christian Klucker has passed into Alpine history. He was a pioneer and a great gentleman.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE LYSKAMM, N.E. FACE

(From the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 40)

A PHOTOGRAPH of the face was sent to Christian Klucker, and that great mountaineer replied at once as follows :

" I have marked the ' Norman-Neruda ' route of August 9, 1890, as accurately as possible. With reference to our 1890 route and to the N.E. face in general, I venture to make a few remarks :

" (1) Our route up the Lyskamm, which I had studied *before* 1890, is the only one, leading from the Grenz Glacier *via* the N.E. face, which is practically safe from ice avalanches. The entire N.E. slope is cleft nearly throughout with overhanging séracs. To the left and right of our rock-rib, and, still more on the upper part of the slope where the other route leading to the W. summit is dotted in on the photograph, are these séracs noticeable.

" (2) Zermatt guides had told me that the N.E. face had already been unsuccessfully attempted before 1890. The attempt was made by the Viennese mountaineer, von Kuffner, with Alexander Burgener and the two brothers Kalbermatten of Saas-Balen, and, curiously enough, their line of ascent lay where the other dotted line is shown, but their intention was where the great rock bastion surmounted by an icefall emerges from the slope (at some $\frac{2}{3}$ of the height of the face), to bear to the *left* and make for the E. or highest summit. (I have faintly marked this route on the photograph.) The two Kalbermatten, while cutting steps on the slope in preparation for the attempt, were caught, just a short way above the bergschrund, by a small avalanche and carried, without damage, back again on to the surface of the glacier. This *memento mori* caused Herr

von Kuffner to abandon the attempt. I regret that I have not got the date of this attempt.

"(3) I wanted a second good professional for our attempt, but it was difficult (without indiscretion) to obtain one in Zermatt. On August 8 Mr. Norman-Neruda informed me that the Tyrolese, Josef Reinstadler, wished to accompany us on this expedition. Reinstadler suited me, because I knew that he was very good on snow and ice, although less than mediocre on rocks.

"On the morning of August 9 as we were going up the Grenz Glacier, I had, strangely enough, a warning that our good Tyrolese was taking the Kuffner-Burgener route as the right one. I heard behind me, before reaching the height of the contour 3,600 m. of the map, Reinstadler saying to Mr. Norman-Neruda: 'Klucker should now bear to the right.' I flatly refused and proceeded. At the spot where the routes bifurcate we halted for breakfast and our Reinstadler set to work to explain our route. The steep rock-rib did not appeal to him and he kept shaking his head whenever he looked at it!

"In the *Œ.A.Z.* of that year, Mr. Norman-Neruda has inaccurately described the episodes of our ascent: he describes me as leading over the bergschrund up to the rib. This is not correct as Reinstadler did all the step-cutting on the snow slope. Thenceforward, over the entire rib up to the summit, I led and the Tyrolese came up last. It seemed to him preferable that Mr. Norman-Neruda should be in front, as he, Mr. Neruda, unquestionably went better, sack and all, over the steep rib."

CHRISTIAN KLUCKER.

FEX, *February 12th* 1928.

APPENDIX II

ON MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Fextal, November 3rd 1923.

MY DEAR WALTER RISCH,—

Your kind letter of September 26th really deserved a prompt answer on my part.

From September 15th up to just recently has been a very disquieting time for me. My niece, who is a nervous invalid, had, to my distress, an acute relapse, so that in the middle of October I had to take her to Chur. And in the midst of this anxious time a libellous article appeared in the "Alpina."[1] As luck would have it, all this coincided with my birthday. Consequently I had to decline the celebration proposed by the Bernina Section and the Engiadina Men's Choir for September 28th or 30th, which was just as well. Under the circumstances my birthday could not have been a happy or profitable one, and the many congratulations seemed like mockery. This bother, which compelled me to write an enormous number of acknowledgments, is now over, and will, I trust, not occur again. The 28th of September means no more to me than any other day of the year, and it has gone by many a time without my thinking of it.

Towards you I have remained the same as in 1921, when we were for the first time—unfortunately only for a little while—in the mountains together. There has been no change on my part, for I admire as much as ever your climbing technique and those achievements that no other guide has touched. And what especially appeals to me, is your quiet modest bearing towards your companions.

[1] Klucker refers to the sharp reply of Dr. Grob of Chur to his sharp article "Coazhütte auf dem Sellapass?" *Alpina*, 1923, pp. 87 and 232.

I am sorry that I have never had an opportunity of operating with you in difficult glacier regions. I hope, however, that you will prove your worth in this direction also.

It was fitting that you should have been mentioned in all my lectures, and I was able to observe that in Eastern Switzerland you were already known as an unusually bold climber. Remarks which I have made to you personally, such as that on rock you might, in my opinion, take too much risk at times, I have certainly made to others now and again. This was invariably done in accordance with the principle I have always followed, i.e. to undertake only so much as one can be responsible for. One should show ambition, because a man without ambition, without the desire for accomplishment, is a nonentity, an aimless drag on human society. All ambition must be within bounds, and for the mountaineer I should call this boundary or curb the desire for self-preservation! I can assure you that I have never *risked* difficult projects, but only proceeded with them, when I was quite certain that I should be able to see them through.

In this sense I am in favour of " aiming higher " or of " screwing up " one's performance. But one should never overestimate one's own strength nor that of one's companions. You write about " aiming higher all the time, so as to keep pace with cultural development." Let us omit *Kultur* in connection with the ideal, free-hearted mountaineer, because too much of a good thing will drive us in mountaineering also into the arms of " sheer sport." The younger generation in particular should hold strictly and strongly to the rule that the ideal conception of mountain climbing is not to be supplanted by sport and competitive rivalry. I despise mechanical mountain climbing, when it becomes a general practice! We too have allowed ourselves some latitude, but only so long as there was a serious technical demand. At the same time we have always enjoyed our environment and have given profound attention to the manifold wonders of Nature. Now comes

the new tendency, which tries to thrust aside the fine ideals of mountaineering for the strain and strife of sport.

You, my dear Walter, I cannot and will not include in this category, for I know that with you, too, the upward urge is the love of our sublime mountains. If I am not mistaken, it was on June 30th that we were able to exchange brief greetings. You had that day, with a new ascent, traversed the Ago from the Sciora to the Albigna Hut, and I was accompanying Dr. Claude Wilson up Punta Pioda, after we had given up the Ago on account of heavy snow on the rock bands.[1]

I apostrophized you then, for the sole reason that you were undertaking a tour of that kind quite alone; but at the same time I could see that you had undertaken that wonderful tour from the urge to find a new route of ascent, and therefore also from the love of the thing. This merits praise and not blame. And what I think of your conquest of the Badile north buttress [2] Herr Zürcher will perhaps have told you.

This "unrivalled" performance of yours is gratifying, not the least because the Italians were pluming themselves on being the pioneers of this route. In this connection I had an interesting argument in the Badile Hut last year, for I would not acknowledge this lead of the Italians as a "new route." One can rope down that way from a smooth church steeple!

Well then, in all your ventures use foresight, and go at them with a cheerful mind as soon as you are sure of your ground. On your winter tours especially let extreme caution be the rule. And as regards the "outward and circumstantial," I hope and trust that the star that

[1] Dr. Wilson writes: "We saw him from Punta Pioda. Klucker spotted him at once. When we got back to the Albigna Hut, we found Risch there, and Klucker was very solemn about it—told him it was a stupid thing to do, and not sound mountaineering."

[2] See article "Bergfahrten im Bergell" by Alfred Zürcher in *Die Alpen*, 1925, p. 6 and following.

followed me constantly, may also keep watch over your undertakings.

With an " Excelsior ! " I salute you in old friendship.

Your

CHR. KLUCKER.

LONELINESS AND LONGING

Fextal, January 9th 1927.

DEAR CARL EGLOFF,—

Your New Year's greeting was more than welcome, for all evidences of friendship have warmed my heart inexpressibly during these gloomy Christmas and New Year holidays. Many thanks, dear friend, for your words, and for the lovely St. Gallen writing-case. Its contents were of great interest.

The thoughts that came to me in my lonely meditation on the eve of the New Year I might sum up as follows:

" The old slips away, giving place to the new ! " I truly want to do all I can to keep pace with the " new." But I am afraid I shall hardly succeed in adjusting all discords and divergences between old and new—between old and young. I cannot keep up in everything, although I value and understand everything youthful and joyous.

The atmosphere which I have been obliged to breathe for months, and the environment in which I vegetate, are not apt to enliven and rejuvenate either my heart or my mind. The cramping monotony around me, and the dismal glimpses into the twilight strangle both heart and mind, and cripple every effort of will ! And yet I should so like to keep my heart and spirit young. Young in the sense that one is able to conceive and understand what youth is striving for and achieving.

The influences to which I have been and am still subjected, are unhappily of such a nature that I can neither keep step with age nor with youth, and I struggle every day and every hour against this pessimism !

My dear Carl, what a different life you lead ! You have an understanding and loving wife, affectionate, joyous and

active children; you have stimulating work, and know for whose benefit you are working! What I do, however, is not destined to be any sort of foundation; it can, I suppose, amount only to a moral duty. If I ask myself the question: "For whom has your life's work been done?" the answer can only be: for those who could not really value it. And now? The circumstances are such—may Heaven hear my grief—that I still have to go on struggling for others without a goal. How long that may continue, only Providence knows! The evening is here, and all that is left to me is my attachment to loving, faithful friends; and that is the only thing which keeps my mind sound and gives me joy in life.

With the eagerness of a child I am looking forward to getting away from this soul-destroying loneliness for a few weeks! The association with beloved people will inspire me once more with new courage, so that I can exclaim with the poet: "The world is God's sublimest work, and man his noblest thought therein!"

You will not count it against me if I have been somewhat overbearing this time! You know that man grows communicative in joy and sorrow.

On my journey from Zürich to Rorschach and back to Herisau I hope to be able to visit my dear St. Gallen friends, and that may afford me an opportunity for a thorough talk. But what I shall enjoy more than anything else is to clasp the hand of my good friend Carl Egloff.

Warmest regards to yourself and your dear ones.

Your old,
CHR. KLUCKER.

OF HIS INNER LIFE

Fextal, October 28th 1923.

MY DEAR AND ESTEEMED DR. JENNY,—

From the middle of September up to the present moment, I have had to suffer a great deal of misfortune and heart-

ache, and I wonder that my old head is still on my shoulders!

It is strange, my dear friend, and yet the fact, that when my mind is oppressed I do not turn to light literature, a humorous sketch, or something of that sort. At such times the serious, the profound, yes even the tragic suits me much better, and almost every time, this kind of reading brings relief from the mental tension. How often have I turned over the pages of "Andreas Fischers Hochgebirgswanderungen," and how much more often have I taken to my heart his "Last Climb," which you have presented so movingly and with such masterly beauty. Each time it has calmed my mind, and yet I must confess that this last chapter always brings tears to my eyes. My thoughts linger with the three hard-pressed comrades on their fatal Aletschhorn expedition, in the terrible stormy night of July 20th–21st 1912. I feel that such an experience must endow a man with something great, something sublime.

For the weary controversy about a Coaz hut on the Sella Pass I have no time. I wish they would leave me alone and in peace. I have been far too much disturbed about it all.

In spite of all sorts of misfortune I live on cheerfully; and regardless of the attempted execution, I hope to begin my 50th year as guide in good health and perfect agility in the summer of 1924. And who knows, my dear Doctor, whether the coming summer may not bring us together on some grand sentinel of our lovely Alps? Such an event would please me enormously.

The three works mentioned in your letter: Strutt's "Climbers' Guide," Strutt's "Ancient Facts and Modern Fiction," as well as "Relazione Tanner: Balabio," were sent to me the day before yesterday by my friend Rütter from Wädenswil. Many thanks for all your trouble.

My motto is now: "Hurry up and work on your 'memoirs,' so that they may be finished by next December!" Only 100 pages have so far been delivered.

Since I am to lecture next January to the Uto, Thurgau,

Bodan and Homberg Sections, it might so happen that I could make a détour to Zofingen to see you.

I will end in the hope of a happy *Wiedersehen.*

With sincere regard and devotion,

Your old,

CHR. KLUCKER.

APPENDIX III

THE SILSERSEE

To The Editor of "Die Alpen," 1926

SHALL this incomparable pearl in the crown of lakes of our Swiss Alpine land be sacrificed for all future time to thoughtless speculation?

. . . Are we free to dispose of a thing which, strictly speaking, belongs to a later generation, and has so high a value as our untouched Silsersee? The answer of us laymen is—Only if absolute necessity and the general interest demand it, may we touch the inheritance of our descendants.

What is it that brings thousands of guests yearly to our mountain valleys? Before all things, the original purity of our monuments of nature! Protect therefore these unsullied beauties of nature, and never barter these away—without necessity—to thoughtless speculation!

Our splendid Silsersee is still untouched and pure, its blue eye shines bright and undimmed for the joy of thousands of mankind who tread its shores. Therefore let the decision of our High Cantonal Government be such that this jewel of our glorious Alpine world may remain untouched for all time.

CHR. KLUCKER.

SILS-FEX.

(*From "Die Alpen," November* 1926; *Kleine Mitteilungen*, pp. 181, 182.)

APPENDIX IV

THE LAST NEW CLIMB

TORRIONE DEL FERRO, E. ARÊTE; JULY 5TH 1927

(Letter from Herr H. Rütter of Wädenswil to Colonel E. L. Strutt)

KLUCKER and I did the E. arête of Torrione del Ferro on July 5th. We succeeded after having waited at the Albigna Hut during ten days for our opportunity. It was a perfectly lovely day, and the snow was consolidated by the *Föhn* régime of the previous days. We crossed Colle del Qualido, Passo Qualido nord, reached the W. summit of Punta Qualido and Bocchetta del Ferro. A traverse on the Albigna side was out of the question, at least under existing circumstances, small insecure snow-patches on steep slabs. So we decided to have a try from the S., despite the forbidding appearance of the rocks. We fastened a stone to a light rope, and threw it from a spot about 20 feet above the gap on to the opposite side, in the hope that the stone might get jammed in a crack. Had we succeeded, our task would have been comparatively easy. But we never did; ropes never get entangled when they ought to.

After several fruitless attempts the rope slipped from our hands and, drawn by the stone, bounded merrily down the couloir into Italy. Well, the Fiorellis may have it if they ever come that way. I don't grudge it them.

We now considered our task well-nigh impossible, but decided to have a very close look before admitting defeat. We descended into the gap from where Klucker sent me out to reconnoitre. He thought my longer reach might give me a better chance of success. Descending a few steps to the S. I got into a slabby crack which I climbed,

helped at first by Klucker's ice-axe. Being unable to get higher up Klucker offered me his bald and venerable head as a standpoint, which offer I made use of with alacrity. By the time Klucker began to realize that my Bernina nails were producing a painful effect on his baldness, I had succeeded in shoving myself higher up and in reaching a small ledge at the base of a steep snow-covered slab.

Now I was in for it, return impossible without considerable risk. The reconnaissance had developed into a serious attempt. Crawling cautiously up the snow I reached the base of smooth perpendicular cliffs which looked absolutely hopeless. Standing insecurely on the snow I considered the situation. I found myself in a broad shallow chimney. In front were two cracks, both unclimbable. It was decidedly uncomfortable. Suddenly I perceived, about 3 feet above me, a small chock-stone in the crack to the left. As a last expedient I took some rope, succeeded in throwing it over the stone, and pulled with caution. Down came the rope. I made a second attempt, down it came again. The third attempt was successful. The rope held, but the stone had moved slightly. Still, it might serve my purpose of getting a little higher up. Pressing my back against one side of the chimney, and pulling gently with the left hand on the rope, to prevent my falling off into the void, I raised myself about 2 feet. Making a long stride upwards I got the right foot on a very small ledge, squeezed myself partially into the crack to the right, which widens out higher up, and secured at last a hold for the left hand. Drawing myself up I got other holds, and found myself presently on the little terrace above the gap. The obstacle was overcome. I roped up ice-axes and rucksacks, whereupon Klucker followed quickly.

Now began the traverse of the snow-covered ledges directly under the arête. These ledges may be comparatively easy with little snow on them. We found much snow at a very steep angle, in some places nearly perpendicular, very exposed throughout. Klucker did all the step-cutting with his wonted unrivalled mastery and sang-

froid, and at 2.45 p.m. we found ourselves on the summit of the Torrione, 11½ hours after leaving the hut.

We went back the same way, roping down into the gap, and reached the Albigna Hut at 11 p.m.

It had been a long and strenuous day, nearly 20 hours, with only very few rests. *Kletterschuhe* would facilitate considerably. The snow prevented our using them.

Now what do you think of a man like Klucker, who with his 74 years was none the worse for such a long day, and who, on arriving at the hut, without changing his clothes, started lighting the kitchen fire and preparing excellent hot coffee? I think him just splendid and quite exceptional.

APPENDIX V

CHRISTIAN KLUCKER

(1853–1928)

(From the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. 41)

ON December 21, 1928, Christian Klucker, following his invariable custom, summer or winter, of wearing no overcoat, but *per contra* carrying a walking-stick, left his home at Fex and walked down to Sils Maria. He called on his friend, Herr Kienberger, at the Hotel Waldhaus *en route* and complained of feeling slight heart trouble. He stated that he would see the doctor. On arrival in the village, he asked for a cup of tea in a restaurant, but before consuming it, quietly and painlessly expired. He was buried in the little churchyard of Fex on December 24. The whole Upper Engadine was represented at the funeral, the coffin disappeared beneath a mountain of wreaths, while deputations from Basle, Zürich, Chur, and other towns attended. Snowfinches, the rare winter visitors he loved so well, circled over Klucker's grave.

A very wise and learned friend, the late Sir Edward Davidson, once warned the writer against the use of superlatives. Yet I cannot help thinking that in speaking or writing of Christian Klucker, even a Davidson might acquiesce.

Klucker was far more than the doyen of first-class guides. This " grand old gentleman," to quote the last of many comments made on him in the *Alpine Journal*, could have filled with distinction almost any rôle in life. He was the Sils schoolmaster, latterly an inspector of schools ; " Papa Klucker " was a constant and affectionate cry raised by children.

A first-class public speaker, an expert in map-reading

and the use of the compass in days when guides and some amateurs were wont to treat such articles with contempt. An ardent lover and collector of books, with an extraordinary knowledge of topography and Alpine History ancient and modern, I feel that the *Journal* has lost in him one of its most distinguished assistants—"the fine fleur of professional culture," abstemious to a fault, in general knowledge and education surpassing all guides and most others. An excellent geologist, botanist and biologist, there was hardly a limit to his versatile accomplishments.

His name was omitted from a somewhat ambitious and unequal work for the obscure reason that he belonged to Eastern Switzerland. Not many of the Pioneers of the Alps could show a record like his! In a career commencing in 1874 no less than 44 first ascents and 88 new routes —in all parts of the Alps, Dauphiné to Dolomites, but of course largely in the Pennine, Bernina and Rhaetian Alps —stand to his credit. He accompanied Whymper to the Canadian Rockies in 1901.

Without a superior as guide or mountaineer, a born leader with humorous and epigrammatic insight into his companions' psychology and powers, his equals might be counted on less, perhaps, than the fingers of one hand. Many of us are content to hear of our best expeditions first repeated again and again in half the time, finally spoken of with contempt. Not so Christian Klucker. He vied with the younger men in modern desperate climbs; at the age of 74 he was accomplishing new routes; two months before his death he led—was there ever an expedition in which Klucker did *not* lead?—in the climb of Punta Rasica (without any rope-throwing), Cima del Largo traverse, Ago di Sciora, all first ascents of his thirty to forty years ago.

He towered, as Piz Badile over Bondo, above all Engadine guides past and present, with Martin Schocher an honourable second. Severe judges such as Edward Davidson, with his unrivalled experience of the best professionals of two generations, have bracketed Klucker with Josef

Pollinger and Franz Lochmatter as the best step-cutters ever known. The precipitous slabs and ridges of the Mont Blanc Aiguilles and the Bregaglia; the crumbling walls, the decaying chimneys of Rhaetikon or Dolomites will acknowledge no superior cragsman. Small and thick-set, short in the reach but gifted with enormous strength, his grace on rocks was extraordinary, while on ice, like Alexander Burgener, he seemed to dilate into a very giant of power.

Of his greatest feats in the Western Alps, I would that Percy Farrar could have written. First there comes the conquest of the great Péteret ridge of Mont Blanc with Rey and Güssfeldt, the N.E. face of Lyskamm, the first Wellenkuppe-Obergabelhorn traverse, and a remarkable attempt alone with Norman-Neruda on the N.E. face and N. arête of the Dent Blanche—defeated by iced rocks, July 31st 1890. In the Central Alps, we recall the N. face of Piz Roseg, the N.E. face of Piz Bernina, both alone with Norman-Neruda; the N. face of Piz Tschierva; the southern face of Crast' Agüzza and a remarkable expedition on Monte Disgrazia, covering much new terrain, Forno to *Sils*, both alone with Farrar, but most remarkable of all, perhaps, stands the only descent of the Fuorcla Tschierva-Scerscen (Güssfeldtsattel). With a party conspicuous for its weakness, he cut down, alone and unassisted, the fearsome northern slope. Each time that Klucker came to the end of the rope he hacked out a large platform, turned and remounted the slope, let his companions down on the rope, redescended and resumed his cutting, till in five hours, equivalent in his case to an ascent as well as descent of the entire pass, he had brought his almost helpless party safely and magnificently to the base of that formidable ice curtain, in the ascent of which the first party had expended two days!

The great north walls of the Bondasca and Trubinasca Glaciers recall his double ascents of the Colle del Badile and Badilet, the fine climb of Punta di Trubinasca, his ascent and descent of the gloomy Cengalo couloir, his

conquest of the Colle dei Gemelli and last, but not least, his solitary and tremendous reconnaissance of the "awful northern precipice" of Piz Badile.

In the Forno-Albigna, among his innumerable exploits, none were greater than the double traverse of Torrione del Ferro's eastern arête, alone with Herr Rütter, a twenty-hour new expedition at the age of nearly seventy-four!

In the Silvrettas, we recollect the double traverse of the Gross Litzner and Gross Seehorn, while in the Dolomites stands out the N. face of the Fünffingerspitze, or actual second ascent of the mountain.

Yet with all his dash, with all his almost matchless skill, there was no more careful climber. He was master of the mountain as he was of his party. The great peaks' hidden dangers were as an open book, easily read, to him. No risk, humanly to be avoided, was run by him. He led his party to victory, never towards defeat, far less disaster.

"Since 1874 I have had the luck to climb every summer and winter in my beloved mountains, and never once in all these fifty years has a serious mishap occurred. No search parties have had to be called upon, and, although I have traversed many difficult glaciers, I have never had both feet in a crevasse! Now I am seventy-two years old and perhaps twilight is approaching."

So wrote Christian Klucker to me more than four years ago. That "twilight" never approached: alone, as he had lived, save for countless friends and admirers, his unconquerable spirit met the end he would have desired. For the rest—let it stand as the epitaph of a great, of a deathless, Mountaineer.

E. L. Strutt.

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